THE RAVENS Almanacke

Foretelling of a { Plague, Famine, and Ciuill Warre.

Dekker Thomas

That shall happen this present yeare 1609. not only within this Kingdome of great Brittaine, but also in *France, Germany, Spayne,* & other parts of Christendome.

With certaine remedies, rules, and receipts how to preuent or at least to abate the edge of these vniuersall Calamities.

LONDON
Printed by E. A. for *Thomas Archer*, and are to sold at his shop in the *Pepis-head-Pallace*, neere the Royall Exchange. 1609.

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To the Lyons of the VVood (the young Courtiers) to the wilde Buckes of the Forreſt (the gallants and younger Brothers) to the Hartes of the field, and to all the whole Countrie that are brought vp wiſely, yet proue Gulles and are borne rich, yet dye beggers; the newe Engliſh Aſtrologer dedicateth his Rauens Almanacke.

BRITISH MUSEUM

O You Lyons of the Wood! you young Courtiers, that are kept warme vnder the winges of Princes and Kings of Chriſtendome, well may I call you the Lyons of the Wood: for this yeare of 1609 ſhall you range vp and downe the woods, Parkes and Chaſes, which were left vnto you by your Anceſtors, full of tall Trees, that ſtood like ſo many armed men to defend your Noble houſes from falling, and your Country from the colde ſtormes of winter: But now I ſay, and propheſie it, with a Rauen-like voice, that like Lyons rob'd of their young, ſhall you goe vp and downe, madding and raging to ſee your ancient honors defaced and the memorye of your fore-fathers buried as it were (ſo farre foorth as the crueltie of theſe latter deuouring daies could reach vnto) euen vnder the rootes of thoſe ſtately Oakes, whoſe gloryes they rayſed to a full height, but now haue their heades hid beneath the earth. The propertie of a Lyon is to feare a Cocke, So likewiſe ſhall you this yeare (if not be affraid) yet be loath to hear the voyces of mercers, tay-

lors, haberdashers, Sempstors, &c. who like Cockes, wil (I gather by the rules of my Arte, stand crowing betimes at your Chamber dores for mony. And like a Bell-man (with papers in their hands) watch to strike you downe with heauy and vnconscionable Items. Gather your selues therefore together in heards, and like Lyons indeed fright them with your suttle lookes, or else like Elephants carrie whole Castles on your backs, and furnish those castles with good store of gold and siluer, so will they be affraid to assault you: let not your strength or courage lye altogether like the Lyons in your taile, but rather in the paw: Stretch forth that boldly, and whatsoeuer it fastens vpon (albeit it should be a whole Lordship, yet let it not goe till you haue torne it in sunder, and made it more leuell then *Salisbury-plaine*: and O you the Wilde Buckes of the Forrest (I meane the Gallants and yonger Brothers of this or any other kingdome) looke that you preserue well the hornes of that abundance, lett vnto you by your scraping and carefull Fathers, least they fal into the handes of Vsurers (who commonly are the keepers of your Lands) as forfeits, or rather (as their fees) make the pales of their parkes where you run hye, that neither you breake out of them, nor others breake them down and so scatter you. Suffer no rascal deer to run amongst you, that is to say, no Pandars, Buffons, English Guls, nor Parasites: beare vp your heads brauely, and not too proudly, for I finde by the coniunction of some planets, that this yeare many of you wil be hunted by Marshalls men, Bayliffes and Catch-poles: and that some will be driuen to take soyle in the bottomeles riuers of the two Counters, they will so hardly be pursued either by Greyhounds of that breed, or else by Fleete-hounds, whose feete are as swifte and sent as good.

I finde likewise that a number of you will fall into certaine toyles, which shal be pitched day and night for you, by certaine greedie hunters called Puncks: they are not much differing from Witches, for they take vpon them sometimes the

shapes

shapes of Beastes, and being amongst your Heards, are strucke insteed of Does: but they proue barren Does, yet are they of the nature of Dogges, and more nimble then Norfolk Tumblers, and more eager then blood-hounds, if they haue their game before them.

O You likewise the Hares of the field! that is to say, the Punies and young Frye of the Lawe, to you among the rest doth my Rauen open her Bill: Listen therefore to her ominous voyce, for she prognosticateth that many plagues will fall vpon you.

Read you only the Dog-dayes of this Almanacke, for whē the Sunne entreth into Leo, and that is in the middle of the yeare, and out of tearme time, you shall finde it will be exceeding hot walking vp and downe Fleet-street and Holborne, especially for those that all this last Christmas haue giuen out in Cheapside amongst the Mercers, that they must be Reuellers.

It is threatned also by those Celestiall influences, that work not in heauen for nothing, that you will this yeare by reason of certaine bitter frosts which shall driue you to drinke burnt Sacke, and rather desire to plead at a Teuerne Barre, and wrangle for a reckoning, then at a Wewminster Barre and weare your Gownes thred-bare, by shouldring one another about Clyants causes, and that yet not-with-standing, you shall so plie the Cases of the Common Lawe, that you shall note aswell in Tearme-time, as in the vacation, till you haue no Feathers left on your backes: howbeit I note and finde it written by an olde Iewish Rabben, that you shall be lusty enough for all your sweatinges and moylinges, and so full of health, that you will scorne to keep your beds, but for more securitie, put the Brokers in Long-lane in trust to keepe them for you.

I read likewise, that you will be so haunted with vayne-glorie, phantasticallitie, Pride, Braggatisme, Apishnes of wit, ridiculous maners, swaggering, & a thousand such byangles,

ſhat you will be glad to leaue all forme (like a Hare being frighted with the yelping of a kennell of Houndes) Beſides, it is quoted by the beſt Star-gazers, and *Erra Pater*, being egregiouſly weather beaten to this Science, doth as I remember conſtantly affirme it, that *Littleton* for all his Lawe, ſhall in Michaelmas Tearme next, be not only thruſt out of Commons, but being found lying poorly (in a plaine ſute of ſheepskin) vpon a ſtall, ſhall not be worth fixe pence.

As for you that are to be my quarter Patrons, or the fourth ſharers in this my Dedication, You that are the meere Sonnes of Citizens, who neuer heard any Muſique but the ſound of Bow-bell: you that all your liues time ſcarce trauell to *Grauesend*, becauſe you are ſworne to keepe within the compaſſe of the Freedome: You whoſe wittes wreſts only for two wayes, monye, and to beare Offices in the Pariſh, I place you in the latter end of this preface to the *Rouen Almanacke*, though you deſerue to ſtand like dominical Letters (at the beginning of euery weeke in red) becauſe you are of the golden age, or rather yon are the Golden number to 1609. Yet giue me leaue to tell you, that this yeare will bring many miſeries vpon your heads, yet ſhall it happen well enough to many of your fraternitie, becauſe euen when thoſe ſtormes are vpon cõming, which by all Aſtrologicall predictions muſt happen, you will be ſure and ſo wiſe, as to hide your heads, and not put them out a doores. Beware of combinations, conſpiracies, and Copartnerſhips, knit amongſt your ſelues for the ſurpriſing of *Plutus* the God of riches: for let the league be neuer ſo ſtrongly tyed, yet it is thought, that at the leaſt foure times in the yeare ſome of you will breake.

To bring which ſtratagem the better to paſſe, I meane that of vndermyning, breaking in vpon you, and blowing you vp, I finde that not only Courtiers but alſo Captaines and your beſt men of war, will neuer giue ouer till they be great in your bookes, and when you haue put moſt truſt in them, then will they get the gates of the Citie, yſſue brauely forth to ſaue them-

themſelues. leauing you to the mercy of your cruell enemies, Serjeants and Creditors.

Thus haue I drawne a payre of Indentures *quadripartite*, betweene you my worthyeſt and moſt open-handed Patrons, ſealing you vp all foure together, in the bondes of my loue, I beſtowe vpon you this firſt Chicken of mine, hatched out of my Aſtronomicall braine-pan. And becauſe euery Almanacke makes as it were a Stage-play of the yeare, deuiding it into foure partes, or rather playes the Executioner with it, by cutting it into quarters: To each one of you doe I therefore ſend a quarter: Climbe vp then and beholde what neſt my Rauen hath builded this yeare 1609. but carry the mindes & manhood of true Pattones, neither ſuffer anye Critickes to plucke off her feathers, nor offer you vnto her that indignity your ſelues. And thus, becauſe much toule weather is toward (if my Calender tell no lyes) and that I am loath to haue you ſtand in a ſtorme, I bid you farwell. Dated the firſt Ides of the firſt month of this firſt great Platonicall and terrible yeare. 1609.

T. Deckers.

BRITISH

THE
Rauens Almanacke.

The Dommion of the Moone in Mans body.

Aries ♈ he head and face

Gemini Armes and shoulders

Leo Hart & backe.

Sagitarius the Thighes

Aquarius Legges.

Taurus Necke and Throate

Cancer Brest Stomacke and Lungs

Virgo Guts and Belly

Scorpio Secrets & bladder

Capricornus. Knees

Pisces The feete

AT the beginning of euery Almanack it is the fashion to haue the body of a man drawne as you see, & not only baited, but bitten & shot at by wild beasts & monsters. And thie fellow, they that lye all ſ. re long (ý is to say, those that deale with Kalenders) call the man of the mon, or the moons man, or ý man to whom the Moone is mistris. But how rediculous a shape doe they bestow vpon the sillye wretch? hee standes as if hee had beene some notorious malefector, and being stript stark naked, to go to execution: do not those roũdles hang about him, shew like so many pardons, tyed to the parts of his body with Labels? or rather does he not locke (when heelyes along) like a theefe beg'd for an Anatomie in Surgeons Hall, so many Barbers

figured in those beastes (slashing and slicing, and quartering and cutting him vp: truely he does.

But why in the name of the moone, and the rest of the Planets do both our Nocterical & the more antique astronomers publish euery yere in print, that euerie mans body dwels thus at 12 signes? Is man such an Asse that hee cannot finde his owne selfe without the help of so manye signes? or were there none but tradesmen in the world, when almanacks were first inuented? for all men know, that Noblemen, Gentlemen, and those of the best and formoste rancks in any common-wealth vse to dwell at no signe at all: much labour therfore me thinks might be saued by the printers euerie yeare, and much cost by the Stationers, if they would crosse this poore creature out of their bookes. For what Cuckolde (vnlesse his hornes hang too much in the light of his wit) will not swear ỹ Aries (which signifies a Ram) doth gouerne the head? Is he not thereupon in mockerie or rather to put him in minde of the points of the Rauens Almanack (cald a Ram-headed Cuckold) And what Butchers wife (nay almoste what Butchers Dog) or what Gamster that loues the beare-garden, but knowes that Taurus (the Bul) dominieres ouer the necke, yea, and sometimes breakes the neck of the strongest mastiffe that sets vpon him? Will not the least Fishmongers boy assure you (either in lent or in the open times) that Cancer the Crab is verie good meat for the Brest, Stomacke and ribs? else wherefore should our Letchers buy them vp so fast? and I pray ask any Wench, if she once arriue at thirteene, if Virgo (the Virgin) beare not a great stroake ouer the bowels and bellye? As for the secret members it may well be saide that Scorpio (the Scorpion) has to do with them, because many times in the yere, they are bitten as it were with the stings of Scorpions, for their euil doing. And wisely did the Moone appoint it (in the lower house of heauen) that Capricornus the Goat, shold gouerne ỹ knees of Gemini: for the goate being of all beasts most leatcherous, it is a morral that those men, who run after nothing but wenches, must (by course of nature) be broght on their knees Now that Gemini (the Twins) haue a hand ouer the Arms & shoulders either of man or woman, euerie woman that hath had

two children at a birth, or euerie countrie Nurse that hath giuen sucke to a couple at one time, will I am sure testifie. Then doth Leo, the Lyon, rule the heart and backe: the meaning of which is, to make men ashamed of cowardice, whose hearts are no bigger then chickens hearts: But what Grocer, Silkman, Apothecarie, or any other that handles the scales of Citie Iustice, but can sweare, and all the world knowes they neuer sweare but truly, that Libra, the Ballance, holds the measure of the Reynes and Loyns: for if those members haue not their full weight, all the bodie paies for it: as for the Thighes ouer which Sagitarius the archer, carries sway, any Fletcher in Grub-street, or any that euer shot in a Long-bowe, either at Buts or at prickes, will if the case were to be decided, stand to the proofe therof. The Legs are nert, and that those are gouernd by Aquarius the Waterman, any Sculer, whose legs get his liuing by a Stretcher, will not deny it. We are now as lowe as the feete, whose steps are guided by Pisces, the two Fishes, any man that walkes into Fish-street for a Fish dinner, knowes the morrall of that.

And thus haue I shewne vnto you the right natures and meanings of these Celestiall Gouernors, according to that true and new Doctrine of the Science Astrologicall, whose misteries haue bene for the good of this yeare 1609 reuealed to me: and therefore doe I request you my countrimen especially, for whose benefit I haue made onely this priuie search amongst the Starres, to account all other quarterings of mans sinfull body, as barbarous and butcherly, and the rules that teach how to doe it, friuolous and rediculous.

The twelue moneths of this yeare. 1609.

NOw if I sought vnder the colours of Vulgar Astronomers, should I strike vp my Drumme, and lead vnto the field the 12. monethes, marching in single File one after another, euerie month wearing in his Cap insteede of a Feather, foure vnhansome rymes, teaching men when to eate hotte

meates, and when to drinke new wines with euerie gul (that has money in his purse, and hunts out any Tauerne) can do without a Kalender.

Then shold euery moneth haue his followers, some of them being thirtie in number, some 31. only one (by falling into decay, or else because he keepes but a cold house, keeping but 28. And amongst these Seruingmen or retainers, shoulo I giue you the names of the Gentlemen who goe in red, and weare Dominicall Letters on their Winter and Sommer liueries, as badges to distinguish their moneth from the rest: but scorning to haue a hand in grinding such base collours, suffer mee to carrie vp your thoughts vpon nimbler wings, where (as if you sat in the moste perspicuous place of the two penny gallerie in a Play-house, you shall cleereiye, and with an open eye beholde all the parts, which I (your new Astrologer) act amongst the Starres, and those are these:

The worky daies of euerie month this yeare, shall not bee kept as they haue bene in yeares before, for by meanes of certaine diseases, that are likely to raigne amongst trades-men, as the lazie euill, the Lethargie, which is a forgetfulnes of our owne estate: dizines of the head, (caused by the fumes of good drinke) and such like: men of occupations shal in spite of order, or the rules of Almanack-writers, turne worky-daies into holly-daies: yea, and women shall this yeare hold holly-daies in such base contempt, that though their husbands doe then shut vp shoppe, and vtter not their wares, yet shall the wiues fall to worke in their secret Chambers.

Amongst Gentlemen that haue full purses, and those that crie trillil, let the world slide, the week shall ron out so quickly and so merrily, that on the Satterday morning it shal be hard for them to tel whether the day that went before were friday.

The same losse of memorie will fall vpon many that shal go drunk to bed: but to those who shut themselues vp in Counters and other places of deere reckoning, because they hate the vanities of the world, and to those that shal be whipped either with French birch, or be strucke with an english disease, the shortest

shortest day in winter shall seeme more tedious, yea, and indeede shal haue more hours then Saint Barnabies day, which is the longest in the yeare: The sundaies, (as if it were Leape yeare) shall by a number be leaped ouer, so that a blindnes falling into their eyes, they shal not for foure or fiue, or fiue moneths together, be able (by the help of those that make the best waters, to recouer sight, or to cure sore eyes) to see a Church, but shall be strucke with such Megrims and turnings of the braine, that insteed of going to Church, they will (if my Arte faile me not) stumble into a Tauerne. The Dog daies will al this yeare raigne thrice, or twice every week at least, & that verie hotly, but their sorest rage will be baout the Beare-garden.

As touching the rising and setting of the Sunne, it will bee more strange this yeare then euer it was: for albeit bee shine neuer so brightly in our Horizon yet there are certain persons (& those no small fooles neither) that shall not haue power at high noone to beholde it. The Moone (like a Boule) will keep her old byas, onely she will be verie various in her influence, for as well men as women shall bee more madde in the other quarters then in that wherein are playd such trickes by the Midsommer Moone.

I haue a moneths minde to trauell thus through the whole yeare, but the glasse which time bestowes vpon me, being not fed with many houres, I must heere hoyst vp new Sailes, & discouer (as it were foure seuerall cõtries) the foure Seasons of the yeare.

A Description & prediction of the foure quarters of the yeare 1609.

Of Winter.

WInter, the sworne enemie to Summer, the friend to none but Collyers and woodmongers: the frost-bitten churle ỹ hangs his nose still ouer the fire: the dog that bites

fruits, and the deuill that cuts downe trees, the vnconscionable binder vp of Vintners Faggots, and the onely consumer of burnt sacke and sugar. This Cousen to death, furtherer to sicknes, and brother to old age, shall not shew his hoary baldpate in this climat of ours, according to our vsual computation, vpon the 12. day of December, at the first entring of the Sunne into the first minute of the signe Capricorn, when the saide Sunne shall be at the greatest South declination from the Equinoctiall line, and so forth, withmuch more such stuffe then any meere Englishman can vnderstand: no my countriemen neuer beat the bush so long to finde out Winter, where he lies like a begger shiuering with colde, but take these from me as certaine, and most infallible rules: know when winter plomes are ripe and ready to be gathered,

When Charity blowes her nailes, & is ready to starue, yet not so much as a Watchman will lend her a flap of his freeze Gowne to keepe her warme: when tradesmen shut vp shops, by reason their frozen hearted creditors goe about to nip them with beggerie: when the price of Sea-cole riseth, and the price of mens labours falleth when euerie Chimnye casts out smoak, but scarce any doore opens to cast so much as a maribone to a Dog to gnaw: when beasts die for want of fodder in the field, and men are ready to famish for want of foode in the citie, when the first word that a wench speakes at your cõming into her Chamber in a morning is, Prethee send for some fagots, and the best comfort a Lawyer heates you withal is to say, what will you giue me: when olde men and their wiues deuide the holy bed of marriage: when gluttons blow their Pottage to coole them: and Prentises blowe their nailes to heat them: and lastly when the thames is couered ouer with yce, and mens hearts caked ouer and crusted with cruelties: Then maist thou or any man be bolde to sweare tis winter.

Now because I finde in the Ephemerides of heauen, certain vnlucky Criticall, and dangerous daies set down, whose foreheads are full of plagues, and vnder whose winges are hid other dismall miseries, that threaten this Region, It shal not

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be amisse if first I open the bosome of Winter, and shew vnto you what diseases hang vpon him.

I finde therefore that 12. great and grieuous plagues, shal especially fall vpon the heads of this our English nation: and those are these: viz.

1. Saint Paulus plague is the first, yea, and one of the heauiest, & this is when a man hath neuer a penny in his purse, credit with his neighbors, nor a hole to hide his head in: alack, how many poore people will lye languishing of this disease? how many that haue bowling alleys, nay, how many that walk in the middle Ile of Paules in reasonable good cloathes, will be strucke with this plague: it is harder to reckon them, then to reckon vp the virtues of a woman which are without end.

2. Saint Chads plague is next, and that is, when a man that trauels hath a long iorney, a tired horse, and little money: this plague threatens many poore Yorkeshire Clyents, and (vnlesse they keep it off with their hooks) some welchmen.

3. Saint Benets plague is the third, & that is, colde cheare, hot words, and a scolding wife: many Coblers will be subiect to this disease, but not li. long for it, but euery day be of the mending hand, marry it is thought their wiues will proone worse and worse.

4. Saint Magnus plague is next, but not altogether so daungerous as the former, and that is, when a man is rich, enioyes it but a while, and leaues a sole behinde him to spend it: It is doubted that some rich Citizens and others cannot escape this plague.

5. Saint Cronions plague steps into the fift place, and that is when a man is olde in yeres, yet a childe in discretion: when his wife is a drunkard, and his daughter a wanton, and his seruant a pilferer: this plague is expected to fall vpon brokers, their bodies being subiect to much infection, and their consciences to corruption. So that tis thought Lord haue mercy vpon vs will stand on most of the doores in Hounsditch and Long-lane, and that people who loue themselues, wil shun those places, and those persons, as being able to poison a whole Citie.

6. Saint

6. Saint Bridgets plague is likely to be very hot, and that is, when a maid is faire and has no portion, of ripe yeares, yet troubled with the greene sickues, and longs for a husband, yet nobody woes her. This plague of all the rest, though it will spread far, yet will it proone so mortall, because those that shal be strucke with it, haue a tricke to helpe themselues.

7. The wiues plague followes in the seauenth rancke, and that is, when a woman has a husband ỹ is very poor, yet iealious: yong, yet a hastie foole. Seruingmens wiues is thought will die of this disease, or if not die yet lie for it a long time.

8. The blacke plague is when a man hath much to pay, little to spend, and an vnmercifull Creditor: this black plague will flie ouer into the Lows-countries, and sorely trouble our English Souldiers, who feed vppon prouant, and take more care how to wipe of Oes in chalke, then to win a towne from the enemie.

9. The Fryers plague, is no holy plague, but a hallowe plague, and that is when a man sees or smels good cheare, has an excellent stomacke, but knowes not how to get it: if any cõplaine of this sicknes it will be the Guard, and those that are the bare attendants at court, or else such as walke snuffing vp and downe in winter euenings through Pye-corner, yet haue no siluer to stop Colon.

10. The deuils plague is one of the most damned plagues of all; and that is, when a man is married to a wanton, must be beholden to his enemie, yet dares not be reuenged. The tokens of this plague, will stand thicke vpon a number of yong bankrouts who haue had dealing with Courtiers.

11. The Horne plague is too well knowne, and so common, that albeit it be incurable yet none can dye of it: that aking plague takes a man first in the head, and he sickens of it, that is a Cuckold, a Wittall, and a Suffragan: In very many parishes will there be houses infected with this pestilent disease.

12. Gods plague is the last and the most heauy, and that is when a man hath much wealth and no conscience, continuall healthy but is past grace, and can talke of God, yet keeps com-

pany

pany with the Deuill. This plague sore strikes to the heart, & will sticke by many euen of the better sort: Besides these Capitall Plagues there be many beyles, Carbunckles and blisters (not so mortal as the other) that will lye sucking the lones of the common people: For Hackney-men are like to smarte this yeare in letting out good Horses to Citizens, & hauing them turned home like tyred Jades, the reason being that Citizens, Scholliers, and Sailers thinke a horse neuer goes fast enough thoughe he run a maine gallop and no sooner are they set in the saddle but they ride post.

And sithence vpon Saint Lukes day bitter stormes of winde and haile are likely to happen about Cuckolds hauen, it sore-sheweth a strange mortality amõgst Caterpillers, especially towards Catch poles, who this yeare shall dye so thicke that in all the 24 wardes in London, nor in all those 109. parishes that stand in those wardes, will there bee founde one honest man liuing of that clapping vocation.

Take heede you my nimble fingred Gentlemen, that come to your possessions by fine and a reach: you Foistes, Nips and Cony catchers that sit at Duke Humphreis owne table, and turne your cõmodities into mony vpon the Exchange. I aduize you all to purge your soules, and let blood your consciences for otherwise a Wempõ plague will so hang vpon you, that the post cart of Newgate will carrie your bodies away in heapes to be buried vnder Tiborne.

O you common Fidlers likewise that scrape out a poore liuing out of dryed Cats guts: I prophecie that many of you shall this yeare be troubled with abhominable noises and singing in your heads, in so much that a great part of you shall dye beggers, and those that suruiue shall feede vppon melody for want of meate, playing by two of the clock in a frostie morning vnder a Windowe, and then bee mock'd with a shilling tyed (through a hole) to a string, which shall bee throwne to make it Jingle in your eares, but presently be drawn vp a gaine, whilst you rake in the durt for a largesse.

O You generation of Apes without tailes, made so onely to

make sporte? you Players that crie out your commodies: you that fæd vpon the hony of other mens wits, yet haue nothing in your bowels but gall: a pestilent sore will run ouer all your bodies: looke therefore to your selues betimes, and let some skilfull water caster cast vpõ your vrinall: cast away a groate vpon your selues, for many haue bin cast away vpon you: foure peny worth of phisicke may do you foure pounds worth of good, for I spye by your colours that you are infected with pride, loosenes of life, Inconstancy, ingratitude, and such like crudes & indegested humors, & reumatick diseases: So that both ptolomy and Auicen set this downe as a principall, that saint Iulians plague (which is not exempt amõngst you yet) shall light on your heads, And that is, you shal weare gay cloathes, carry lofty looks, but a nũber of you (especially the hierlings) be with emptie purses at least twice a week. But if any of you be so prouident as to Phlebotomize, or to buy pilles to euacuate these rotten infectious postumes, yet he shall not escape this plague, he shall be glad to play three houres for two pence to the basest stinkard in London, whose breath is stronger then Garlicke, and able to poyson all the 12. penny roomes: you see a far off how sharpe a winter wee are like to haue, let vs now trye if the spring will proue any more cheerefull.

Of the Spring.

Spring the Bride of the Sun, the Nose-gay giuer to weddings, the only and richest Pearbe-wife in the world: the rarest Gardner, sweetest perfumer, cunningst Weauer, noblest Musition, for all sorts of Birdes are her Schollers: this mother of health, phisition to the sicke, Surgeon to the wounded: this daughter of plenty, and Sister to Summer, comes not inattired in her gréene roabes, as tis published in print, vpon the 10 daye of March, as it were Pales tryumph after the Sun (with an Herculean vigor) hath cõquered his twelue labours, and (like a skilfull Charioter) hath driuen his golden

den wagon through the twelue signes, ready on that tenth day (as some giue out) to begin his race againe, by making his entrance vpon the first minute of the Equinoctial signe of the Ram whose hornes stand in such an euen proportion asunder that the day and night take them for their measure, and are contented to be of an equall length.

But shall I tel you at what signe the Spring dwelleth? cast vp your eies and behold, for by these marks shal you know her whē she comes. When the nightingale sits singing with a brier at her brest, & the adulterer (that rauished philomell) sits singing at the Thornes which pricke his conscience: When young yeares put on new liueries, and old whoremongers put off vizards of ther vices: when the earth beares all kindes of flowers, and the Courts of Princes bring forth all sorts of vertue: when Gardens begin to be dressed, and the Church to be mended. when beastes ware wanton by nature, (without violating her lawes,) only to multiply their kinde for the good of man: & when men no longer put themselues into the shapes of beastes. Then and onely then doe the vernall gates stye wide open, then maist thou be sure to sweare it is the Spring.

But as your faireſt faces haue often times the foulest bodies, so this beautifull daughter of old Ianus (who is Maister Porter to the twelue moneths) is by dealing with some fewe vnholsome Planets, thought not to be free from diseases. A spice therefore of one plague or other, will lie in her tender bones, by wᵗ meanes the spring to some people (especially the French, and as it is thought the English cannot goe scot-free) proue as fa tall and as busie in priuie Searches, as the fall of the Leafe.

The brests of this dilicate young bed-fellow to the Sunne will so flowe with the Milke of profitte and plentye that (of all other men) players by reaſō they shal haue a hard winter, and must trauell on the hoofe, will ye sucking there for pence and two pences, like young Pigges at a Sow newly farrowed.

It is likewise thought that in this time of copulation betweene the planets & the earth, lawyers wil grow vp so thick that they will scarce liue one by another, & most of them shall be to their Clients as tares are to a field of Corne: they shall prosper best when they choake those by whome they are nourished: yet on the cõtrary side shall maiden-heads be so scant, that if fiue hundred be to bee had ouer night, foure hundred & nineteene of those will be struck of before the next morning.

The disposition of this season is to be hot and moist: by which meanes those moist-handed creatures, whose bloods begin to feele warmth, when the spring of desire boyles within them, shall haue the other qualitie likewise, they shall be hot in their tongues: But if any woman happen to fall into that pestilent infirmitie, let the poore man vpõ whose handes any such light commodities lyes, apply this medicine, for it is a present cure.

A Medicine to cure the plague of a womans tongue, experimented on a Coblers wife.

A Merry Cobler there was, (dwelling at Ware) who for ioy that he mended mens broken & corrupted soles, did continually sing, so that his shop seemed a perrie bird cage, & he sitting there in his foule linnin and greasie Apron, shewed like a black bird. It was this poore Sowters desteny not to be hang'd, but (worse then that) to be married: & to what creature thinke you, to a faire, to a young to a neate delicate coũtrie lasse, that for her good partes was able to put downe all Ware: but with this honny that flowed in her, did there drop such aboundance of gal and poison from her Scorpiõ-like tongue, that monsieur Sho-mender wished his wife were set vpon the shortest lasse, and a thousand times a day was ready to die Cæsars death. O valiant Cordwayner! and to stab himselfe not with a bodkin, but with his furious Awle, because he knew that would goe through stitch: hee neuer tooke vp the

ends.

endes of his threed, but he wished those to be the endes of his threed of life: he neuer parde his patches, but he wished his knife to be the sheeres of the fatall Sisters three: hee neuer handled his Ball of ware but he compared them to his wife & sighed to think that he that touches pitch, must be defiled. Now did his songs as heauily come from him as musick does from a Fidler, when in a tauerne he plaies for nothing. Now did Signeur Cobler stand no more on hispantofles, but at his shutting in of shop, could haue bene content to haue had all his neighbours haue throwne his olde shooes after him when hee went home, in signe of good lucke.

But alas, he durst not doe that neither, for shee that plaide the Deuill in womans apparell (his wife I meane) made her Caualero Cobler, to giue her account euerie night of euerie patch that went through his fingers. In this purgatorie did our graduate in the Gentle craft liue a long time, but at length he was thrust into hell, for his wife (not following the steps of her husband, who was euer on the mending hand, but growing from bad in to worse) cast aside her Wedding stockings & drew on a paire of yellow hose: then was my miserable Cobler more narrowly watched thē a mouse by a Cat, or a debter by a Catch-pole: hee durst not vnlock his lippes after a Wech, but his teeth were ready to flie out of his head wt her beating: not haue touched any Petticoate but his wife was more dangerous then for a Cat to eate fire: if any maide brought but her shooes to mending, his wife swore presently that he had the length of her foote, and that he sowed loue-stitches intoe, euerie peece though it were no bigger then a Chandlers token.

Wearied therfore with this (worse then a beare-baiting) and being almost worne to the bare bones, his hart fretting out euen to the elbowes by rubbing vp and downe in this miserie. At the length my braue boote-haler fitted his wits to the veric brain, for some hooke to fasten into his wiues nostrils, and the pill which he found either to choake her or purge her, was this:

A Doctor of whome all Ware was afraid, because the Wi-

ear of the towne ſuck'd more ſweetneſſe out of his Patients whome he ſent to him (by reaſon all that came vnder his hands, went the way of al fleſh (then out of all his tithe-Pigs) hapned to dwell cloſe by this diſtreſſed Cobler. to him (hauing ſaued his water ouer night) repaires my reformer of decayed Shoo-leather, betimes in the morning. The Bonjour being giuen and returned, the Coblers water was looked into, much tolling and tumbling of it there was for a prettie while, and at laſt it was demaunded whoſe the Urine ſhould be? Mine (quoth the Cobler) So it may be replyed our Gaieneſt, for I ſpeie nither any diſeaſe ſwimming about thy body in this water, and thy verry lookes ſhew that thou art ſound: Sound, cries out the infected Cobler) alas ſir I ſee now that ſome diſeaſes haue power to make dunces of Doctors themſelues, Sound (quoth a) why ſir I am ſick at heart, I am ſtruck with the plague, I haue ſuch a plague ſore vppon mee (your Doctors Cap is not able to couer it, tis ſo broade) it eats and ſpreds more and more into my fleſh, and if you apply not ſome preſet remedie, Ware muſt e ſhall trudge to ſome other, whē their olde ſhooes want mending: for the Coblers but a dead man.

At this the Doctor ſtood amazed, and wondred that his ſki ſhould ſhoote ſo wide as not to finde out a greeſe ſo commō, ſol dangerous and ſo palpable: whervpon he bidding the Cobler to open his breſt and not to feare to ſhew him that Plague-ſore where of hee ſo complained: the Cobler preſently tolde him he would but ſteppe forth of doores, and at his return he ſhould ſee it: at length, the Colber comes backe againe with his wife borne on his backe like a Sowe new ſcalded on the back of a Butcher, and for all her kicking, rayling, curſing and ſwearing yet to the Doctor he came with her, crying looke you heare Maiſter Doctor, this is my plague ſore that ſo tormeets mee: in the night it keepes mee from ſleepe, in the day it makes me madde: in my bed this ſerpent ſtings me at my boord ſhe ſtabs me, and all with one weapon (her villanous tongue, her damnable tongue) if I

reply

reply she fightes: if I say nothing shee raues: if you call not this a plague Maister Doctor, then such a plague light on you Maister Doctor, teach me therefore how to cure it, or else if you giue me ouer I shall grow desperate and cut mine owne throate.

The Doctor at this laughed, the Coblers wife rayled, the Cobler himselfe bid her lye still, & held her so long till a number of his neighbors came about him to behold this sceane of mirth: al of them (knowing how dangerously the Cobler was infected with this mariage plague, desiring the Doctor to play the right phisitian, and to cure their neighbour. The Doctor heere vpon swore he would doe it, and stepping into his studie hee returned immediatly with a paper in one hand & a faire cudgell in the other, deliuering both to the Cobler, protesting that neither Gallen, Auarois, nor Hipocrates can prescribe any other remedy then this, and that if this medcine cure not the womãs euill, nothing can. The Cobler hauing neither the writing nor reading tongue, requested the Doctor to reade the receipt, as for the cudgel he vnderstood that wel enough.

The paper therefore after a solemne O yes, by all the standers by was read, & contained thus much:

Take this salue Cobler for thy plague-sore
A crabbed cudgell fits a froward whore,
Beate her well and thriftily,
Whilst she cries out lustily:
Neuer set thy hand giue ore,
Till she sweares to scolde no more.

At the end of this, the audience gaue a plaudittie, in token they liked well of the Doctors phisicke: the Cobler thanked him, and thus in steede of an Epilogue spake to his neighbors. neighbors (qd. he) you know, & I know, nay the deuil himselfe knowes, that my wife hath stucke vppon mee like a Plague thus many yeares, to apply either the sirrop of a Salt Eele, or the oile of holly to her shoulders, I heatherto was afraide, because I had no warrant that a man might lawfullye beate his wife.

But

But now sithence Maister doctor (who weares not a veluet nigh t-cap for nothing) hauing turned ouer his bookes, findes that no hearbe, mineral, saiue, nor plaister no purging nor any other blood-letting will cure or take out that worme vnder a womãs tongue, (which makes her mad) but onely a soũd beating: I will (God willing) giue her the diet hee sets downe, & if euer I complaine here after to any Phisition for the grief of this plague, let all ware laugh at me for an asse, & swear that my wife weares the breeches.

Vpon this resolution brauely does the Cobler march home, his wife (like a furie) folowing, railing, reuyling and casting dirt and stones aswell at him as at the youthes of the parish that went shouting after her heeles, But being within dores and the locks made fast by my valiant Cobler, her tongue serued as a drum or trumpet to soũd an alarum, whilst my braue desper view prepared for the onset with a good bastinado: the assault was not so furious, but the coblers wife was as ready to receiue it: to the skirmish fall they pell, mell, the Coblers Corcombe, being first broken, but he being no Welchman (to faint at sight of his owne blood (so plide his businesse, and soe thrash'd out all the Chaffe in his wife (who was nothing but Ry) that in the end she fel one her knees, cried for the crummes of the Coblers mercy, & fed vpon them hũgerly, he liuing euer after more quietly for her scolding, then if hee had dwelt in a Steeple full of bels that had lost their claps.

Thus much for the vniuersall plagues, that threaten our kingdome this present yeare 1609. Now let vs arme our heads to beare off the other miseries that are ready and must (by decree in the vpper house in the heauenly parliament) fall vpon mankind.

A prediction of Summer. 1609.

Summer the Minion of the yeare, and mistris of the earth: daughter and heire to the spring, and empresse ouer manye kingdomes: whose robes are fieldes of standing Corne, and whose

whose crowne is a garland of all sorts of fruits: Summer the releeuer of the poore, and Landlady to the rich: the Ploughmans Goddesse, to whome he praies, the Husband-mans Queene whome he worships: the filler vp of barnes, the feeder of Birds, the fatner of men and beastes, the treasurer of the world: the nurse of plenty, the enemie to dearths and famine: Summer, that is the Saint, to whome Bowyers and Fletchers kneele, in whose praise Archers send forth showts, and Hay-makers merry songs. This high-coloured red-lip'd, liuely-facde creature, comes not by turn to her coronation (to take her rule ouer the fourth part of the deuided yeare, vppon the eleuenth day of June (according to common Astronomical computation, when the Sunne (the Coachman of the light) hath fetcht a carrire vp as hie as the vtmost and loftiest place of his eare, namely to the first degree of the Estiual Solstice (Cancer) which is his greatest declination to the North, from the Equinoctiall, &c. But the Buckles of the Girdle (with 12. Studs) which he weares, being this yeare 1609) turned behinde him, & the celestiall houses, at which he vses to lie (in his summer progresse) being now remooued and builded in other places, I finde that he shall enter at other gates, and that these shall be the harbingers, to make way before his cōming, or the Heralds to proclaime the time when he is come.

When therefore our aged grandam (the earth) shall (albeit in her latter dayes) be great with childe with Corne, flowers and fruits, & be ioyfully deliuered of them, yet other creatures (indued with reason) shall be barren of all goodnes: When the heat of the Sunne-beames, begets golde in the veines of the earth, yet gold when tis brought forth shall worke a coldnesse in mens hearts: when Riuers shall swell with Spring-tides, and the fountaines of Art and learning be drawn dry: when sheepe flie to broad trees to defend themselues from the wrath of heauen vnder their shades, and when innocencie is guarded vnder the wings of greatnes from the rage of oppression: when cuckows sing merrily, and cuckolds laugh at their owne hornes: when Courtiers ride the Wilde goose Chase,

whilſt farmers ſtand by and praiſe their horſemanſhip: when harueſters come ſinging from the field, becauſe the corne lies in sheales: and when Citizens wiues walke to their Gardens, yet bring from thence to their husbands no Noſe-gaies ſtuck with Rue. Theſe and no other but theſe are the badges that Summer weares, and neuer comes in but when ſhe puts on theſe iineries.

And albeit this Lady of the yeare, be (like her couzen the Spring) of a ſwéet and delicate complexion, and that her body is by nature ſo fruitfull, that ſtill and anon ſhe is in labour to bring forth, yet that curſſe which at the firſt was laid vpon the earth, ſhall now this yeare 1609. fall vpon her, inſomuch that her luſty and ſtrong limbes ſhall grow weake by want, and her entrailes be ready to dry and ſhrinke vp to nothing by reaſon of a ſtrange famine, that moſt aſſuredly will féed vpon her.

Many deare yeares are ſet downe in our abridgements of Chronicles, but the face of this ſhall looke more leane then euer did any: I reade that in Edward the 2. time, there was ſuch a famine, that Horſe-fleſh was eaten and held as good or better meate then ſome mutton now: and that fat dogs, were then catched vp as fat pigs at Bartholmew tide: yea, that in many places, they had the dead bodyes of their owne children to deuoure them, and that théeues in priſon made roaſt-meat one of another. In other Kings raignes likewiſe haue I noted other effects of hunger, as that théepe haue béene ſold at this price: Hogs, Chickens, Pigs, Géeſe, Cocks, with all other broodes of poultry-ware, at ſuch & ſuch exceſſiue rates, which haue béene lamentable to endure, and tragicall now to remember. But in this yeare 1609. beaſts ſhall not bee ſolde deare, but men, yea, men ſhall be bought and ſold like Oxen and Calues in Smithfield, and young Gentlemen ſhal be eaten vp (for daintie meate) as if they were pickled Géeſe, or baked Woodcocks.

Neither ſhall the téeth of this famine teare out the guts of the poore Farmer alone, nor ſhall the Country village cry out

vpon

vpon this misery, but it shall euen step into Lords, Earls, and Gentlemens houses, Insomuch ỳ Courtiers shal this dismal yeare feed vpon citizens & citizēs on the cōtrary side lay a-bout them like tall trencher men to deuoure the Courtiers. the Clergie in this greedy gotted time shal haue thin cheeks for euery body shal fleece or rather vnfleece them, and count it heauenly purchase to pull feathers from their backs.

If any complaint this yere be made for the scarcity of bread, let none be blamed for it but Tailors, for by al the consent of the Planets, it is set downe that they wil be mighty bread-eaters, insomuch that half a score half-penny loaues wil make no shew vpon one of their stals. But least we make you hungry that shall reade of this misery, by discoursing thus of so terrible a famine, let vs make haste to get out of the heart of this dry and mortall Summer, and trye what wages the yeare will bestow vppon vs the next quarter.

Of Autumne or the fall of the leafe.

AUtumne, the Barber of the yeare, that shaues bushes hedges and trees: the ragged prodigall that consumes al and leaues himselfe nothing, the arrantest begger amongst al the foure quarters, and the most diseased, as beeing alwaies troubled with the falling sickneſſe, and (like a frenchman) not suffring a hair to stay on his head: this murderer of the spring this theef to summer, and bad companion of Winter, scornes to come in according to his old custome, when the Sun sits like Iustice with a pair of scales in his hand, weying no more houres to the day then he does to the night, as he did before in his Vernall progreſſe, when he rode on a Ram: but this bald-pate Autumnus, wil be seen walking vp & down groues, medows, fields, woods, parks and pastures, blasting of fruites, and beating leaues from their trees, when common highwayes shall be strewed with boughes in mockery of Summer, and in triumph of her death, & when the dozes of diuers

shall bée strewed with greene hearbs, to doe honour to poore brides that haue no dowrie (but their honestie) to their marriage: when the world lookes like the olde Chaos, and that plentie is turned into penurie, and beautie into vglinesse: when Penride (the second time) to Bathe, and carry another Cornelius Tub with them, and when vnthrifts flie amongst hen sparrowes, yet bring home all the feathers they carried out. Then say that Autumne raignes, then is the true fall of the leafe, because the world and the yeare turne ouer a new leafe.

You haue heard before of certaine plagues, and of a Famine that hangs ouer our heads in the cloudes: misfortunes are not borne alone, but like married fooles they come in couples, A Ciuill warre must march at the heeles of the former misery, and in this quarter will he strike vp his drum.

The dissention that hapned once at Dreford, betweene a Scholler and a Vintner, about a quart of clarret wine, was but a drie beating, nay rather a flea-biting to this for vproare and noise will fill all Countries, insurrections or risings vp willbe within the cittie, and much open villany wil be without the walles.

The hottest and heauiest warre the blackest and bitterest day of battaile that is prognosticated to happen, shalbe betweene Lawyers and their clyants, and Westminster-hal is the field where it shall be fought: What thundering, what threatning, what mustring, what marching, what brauing & out-brauing, with summoning to parlees, and what defiance will there be on both sides: dismall will be these conflicts to some, deadly to others, and ioyfull to a third sort: It is not yet doombd by the celestiall arbiters, on whose side the victory shall lye, but by all Astrologicall likelihoods, it is thought that the Lawyers will carry it away (be it but with wrangling) and they that goe armed with buckram bagges, and pen and inke hornes in stead of flaske and touch-bore, by the tree sides, you shoote nothing but paper-bullets, wil haue those that march with blacke bores at their girdles, and billes

in

in their hands, in ſudden and terrible execution.

Another ciuill warre doe I finde will fall betweene plaiers who albeit at the beginning of this fatal yeare, they ſalute one another like ſworne brothers, yet before the middle of it, ſhall they wiſh one anothers throat cut for two pence. The contention of the two houſes, (the Gods be thanked) was appeaſed long agoe, but a deadly war betweene theſe three houſes will I feare burſt out like thunder and lightning. For it is thought, that flag will be aduanced (as it were in mortall defiance againſt flag) numbers of people will alſo be muſtered and fall to one ſide or other, the drums and trumpets muſt be ſounded, parts will then euen by the chiefeſt players bee taken: words will paſſe to and fro, ſpeeches cannot ſo be put vp, hands will walke, an Alarum be giuen, fortune muſt fauour ſome, or elſe they are neuer able to ſtand: the whole world muſt ſtick to others, or els all the water in the Theames will not ſerue to carry thoſe away that will be put to flight, and a third faction muſt fight like wilde buls againſt Lions, or elſe it will be in vaine to march vp into the field.

Yea, and this ciuill mutinie in the Suburbs, and this ſitting vpon the skirts of the Cittie, will I doubt kindle flames in the heart of it: for all Aſtronomers conclude, and all the bookes of Conſtellations beeing turned ouer, ſpeake thus: that vppon the very next day after Simon and Iude, the warlike drum and fife ſhall be heard in the very midſt of Cheapſide, at the noiſe whereof people (like madmen) ſhall throng together, and run vp and downe, ſtriuing by all meanes to get into Mercers, Silkemens, and Gold-ſmithes houſes: to ſuch height ſhal this land-water ſwell, that the 12 Conduits themſelues are like to be ſet one againſt another, and not only the Lord Maior, Sheriffes and officers, but alſo many of the Nobilitie of the land ſhall haue much adoe with their troopes of horſe, to breake through the diſordered heapes of Tradeſmen, and others that wil on that fearefull day be aſſembled together. In vaine ſhall it be for any man to Cry peace, nothing will be heard but noiſe, and the faſter that fire-works

are throwne amongst these pernicious children, the lowder will grow their rage, and more hard to be appeased. Other dissentions, mutenies, rebellions, battailes, combats, and combinations could I heere discover to you my countrimen, but doubting that I put your hearts out of their right places alreadie with too much horrour and affrightment, heere doe I sound a Retreate, intreating all men (with mee) to draw supplications, and to exhibit them to the whole body of the celestial Councel, who sit in twelue houses of heauen, beseeching them that their influences may be more milde, that men may not bee so mad, and that women may turne from their ill doing.

I haue (if you remember) applied certaine salues to some of those plagues set downe before which I thought curable, It shall not be amisse, if now likewise I beat out a plaine and leuell path, in which you may walke safely, aswell to auoide the famine threatned, as to escape perishing in the ciuil war.

The comfort men haue in a time when victuals growe deere or scant, is either to be well furnisht or els to haue the gift of abstinence, and to be content with little: Now because flesh is a great preseruer of mans life, I will shew you one Stratagem how you may get much into your owne hands, how to vse it when you haue it, and how to refraine from taking of it, albeit your hunger be neuer so great: then will I set downe other rare medicinable and politicke receipts, or rather warlike engines, by which in time of such ciuill insurrections as are this yere like to happen, A man or woman may inforce themselues from the shot of all danger. For I would account that surgion or that phisition, a mad man or a foole, that comming to me when I am hurt or diseased and should onely tell me where my sickenes lies or how deep and dangerous my wounds are, but should not minister phisicke or balmes to recouer me. As therefore I haue discouered vnto you where and how and with what weapons you shall bee smitten, so doe I prepare medicinable compositions to restore you when you are strucke. And heere they followe,

An

An excellent Stratagem, how in the time of Famine, to be well prouided of flesh, how to preserue it a long time from corruption, and how (when hunger is most sharpe set) a man shall haue no lust to fall too, but may grow abstinent.

In the Cittie of Caliz (being an Iland bordering & belonging to the kingdome of Spaine) ther was built a Colledge of Fryers, amongst whome there was one lusty Church-man aboue the rest, who was better limmed then learned, & could better skill in compiling an amorous sonnet then in saying solemne dirges. This Fryer notwithstanding bare such a holy shew, was so demure in his manners, and so couertly cloaked his holinesse, that he was supposed the holiest fryer of all the fraternity, and therfore was appointed a confessor to a nunry, that was famous in this Iland, for women of most seuere forme of life & godly conuersation. Vnder the iurisdiction of the Abbesse, there were some twenty Nuns, all young, lusty, and full of fauour: very deuout, and yet no such recluses, but they had eies as other seculer women had, to iudge of beauty, and hearts to wish wanton thoughts, which after grew to light (as time is the discouerer of most hidden secrets:) for it so fel out, amõgst these holy she saints, that one was either more wise or more wanton then the rest, called Madona barbadora; issued of good parentage, and only daughter, though not only child to Signieur Peagnes Bontolus, a man of great reputation in the Citie of Caliz. This Barbadora comming oftentimes to be confessed of this fryer, whose name was Father Pedro Ragazoni, noted that he was a man of comely personage, & so began somwhat fauourably to conceit of him: till at length frier Pedro marking her glances, perceiued shẽ to be amorous, & with that hearing her sigh sundry times (ere he had con'ft her) did straight imagin that either she was a great sinner, & deeply repentant, or else sore ouer laden wt ẏ maidens plague, (which is ouer large chastitie) and therfore so full of outward sorrow & contrition: the frier taking her one day by the hand as she was alone with him in a pew, wisht her to vncouer her face. Barbadora obeying her ghostly fathers commaund, threw off her vaile & blusht, which Fryer Pedro espying, kissing her cheeke, began to salute her in this manner.

Faire

fayre Nun, and fayre maide, as I am your confessor, and haue power to absolue, so if you conceale any sinne from me, it will craue the greater punishment: therefore briefely and faithfully answere me to my question. There be many sinnes that trouble maids which may be eased, if they be preuented by some friend, or faithfull counsellor: as vnchaste wishes, wanton glances, amorous thoughts, and such veniall scapes, which are ingrafted by nature, and therefore craue pardon by course, and yet all deseruing pennance but seeing they are but sins of the minde, they are but motions. What say you Barbadora are you troubled with any of these tasting follies. The Nun bowing downe her head softly answered, she was a woman and her mothers daughter.

Fryer Pedro smelling a pad in the straw, prosecuted thus pleasantly. And is it sweet maiden (qd. he) for those sins you sigh: oh no holy father (quoth she) for they bee deeper passions that make me so sorrowful: Why (saies the Fryer) is it pride, couetousnesse, gluttony, enuy, wrath, sloath, or any such deadly sinnes that driue you into those dumps? I would said Barbadora) I were as free from all other as from these: then said the Fryer, my life for yours, it is some womans plague you are troubled with al, and if it be so, take heed, it is daungerous, the sinne is more easie then the sicknesse.

I pray you sir saith she, what terme you that plague? marry answers the fryer, that plague is, when a Maiden is fayre, young, of ripe yeares, and hath neuer a faithfull friend to her loue, but must in so great distresse dye a Virgin: that, that my reuerend Confessor, quoth the Nun is my griefe: you haue censured right of my sorrow, I am troubled, with that harming plague, and if your counsell comfort me not, I am like to fall into greater inconuenience: seeing therefore you are priuie to my disease, as you are a Ghostly father, and haue care of my soule to absolue my sins (for I hould you as a surgeon) therefore yours be the charge to practise for the health of my body. The Fryer hearing the Nunne in so good a minde whispered in her eare, but what I cannot tel, but I am sure he applyed

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such plaisters to helpe her, that she complained no more of the plague a long time after.

Barbadora being thus set free from her often sighes, could not keepe her owne counsell, but she revealed it unto her bedfellow: for the closet of a womans thoughts hangs at her tongues end) in such sort discourst the conceit of her cure unto her, that Iulia longed for the confessing day, (for so was the Nun her fellow called) which being once come, and she in secret with Fryer Pedro, after he had questioned her of many sinnes, at length with devout and holy counsell, at last she burst forth into plaine termes, and told him she was troubled with the same sickenesse her bedfellow Barbadora was, and therefore craved the like assistance at his hands. The Frier smiling at this, was content to play the Surgeon to cure this plague, still under the colour of auricular confession, shadowing his villany, till of twenty Nuns, fifteene were with childe.

At last, time began to babble, and the Nuns bellies to grow big, so that before three months were past, they began to feele the first forings of their plague, they had a spice of Tympany not long after, the world was quick, that the Nuns grew big: and to be briefe, they feard their fellows should perceive their fault, & so bewray it to the Abbesse, whereupon with a generall consent they all agreed at their next confession to bewray it to the Fryer, which was not long before it happned. So Barbadora cunningly dissembling the matter, being foremost of the rest, because she was eldest and of greatest account with the Abbesse, came to confession. And whē Fryer Pedro began with many a smiling looke and holy kisse to greet her and question her about her sinnes, fetching a great sigh made him this answere: Devout father, to make a rehearsall of my sinnes, is folly: to tell what particular offences have scapt from me is needlesse, because in one briefe word, as he that sinnes in one of the ten commandements breakes all, so shee that by a Frier is gotten with Child, hath blemisht [illegible] her other vertues. And sir, therefore I confesse heere that my belly is bigge, and your sweete sugery hath wrought [illegible] you must

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bestirre your wits to helpe now at a pinch, or else your discredit will be as great as my dishonour. The Fryer although this motion had greatly amazed him, yet he would not shew it in countenance, lest he might discourage his faire Lemman, but bad her be of good cheere, and not to feare, for he would be charie of her honor and credite, and salue what was amisse to both their contents. I sir (qd. she) were my selfe onely in this perplexitie I would not doubt of your present deuise, but there is fourteene more besides my selfe, all troubled with the like swelling: What sister (qd. the Fryer) and with that hee fetcht a great sigh, and said, I haue made the olde saying true, who sowes shall reape: I quoth Barbadora, if it be but a whip and a white sheete, and therefore good Fryer, take heede that your pennance be not worse then our punishment, for your ghostly surgerie hath brought vs to this diuellish sicknesse. Feare nothing Darling (quoth he, and smild) Fryers haue wit, as women haue willes, and therefore doubt not of any conceit, but tell me what is your greatest care? Mary (quoth shee) that the fiue that are free, perceiue vs not, and so discouer our faults to the Abbesse. Leaue that to me (quoth he) I will take order for that, to your high content, and so with great comfort to his holy sister he sent her away with a kinde confession, and tooke himselfe to the rest, who all sung the same song that Barbadora did, which put the poore Fryer to his shifts, but when hee had confest them all, subtilly he went to the Abbesse & saluted her, and she returning him as kindly greetings, questioned how her twelue Nuns profited in vertue. Truely Madam (sayd Pedro) well, but amongst twelue Disciples there was one Iudas: and when Adam had but two sonnes, one proued a murderer: in Noahs Arke there was one Cham, and where God hath a Church, the diuell hath a Chappell.

The Abbesse hearing the holy Father beginning such an enigmaticall exordium, began to suspect that there was some mischance amongst her Nuns, and therefore called him into the Orter, and desired him to bewray vnto her what was amongst the[illegible] for (that had fed vpon so much mutton cunningly

cunningly began to insinuate himselfe vnder the shape of Abacuk, thus Madam you know that it behoues a Confessor to be as secret as seuere, and to conceale offences, as well as he appoints correction for sinnes, therefore I may not nor dare not for mine oath reueale what either I know or they haue confest, but this in priuate I giue you as a Caueat, if they stay long in your Cloister, they will discredit your house, and bring it in great approbatious question: with that he named the fiue honest Nuns, and with a solemne protestation, admonisht the Abbesse as spedily as might be to conuey them out of the Nunry with credit. She thanking the holy Father for his care he had of her honour, gaue him gold for his paines, & bad him farewell, still imagining what this matter might be: and examine them she durst not, lest they should suspect their Confessor had discouered their confession, and so vpon their complaint bring the Fryer to further trouble, yet willing to haue them remoued (so to saue her house from blemish) she sent for their friends, and dealt so couertly and cunningly with them, that they were taken home for a time, till further tryall of their fortunes might be had. Their friends and parents sorrowfull and grieuing, that they aboue the rest should miscarry, yet conceald all, and shadowed their home comming by sundry excuses, and yet not so cunningly but the common people began to imagin diuerslly of their departure, but none durst censure openly, though they muttered in secret, so that after many daies all was whisht, and the other Nuns were glad, for all were feathered of one wing, and did so closely comfort themselues, that the Abbesse suspected nothing, and Fryer Pedro had more free accesse to Clergifie his holy Virgins and confessants, and made an agreement, that which of them was brought to bed first, should giue him their Childe, and he would conuay it away to their content and his owne credit.

Liuing thus as pleasantly as a Cocke amongst so many Hennes, it fell so out at the last, that Barbadores good houre was come, and that at such an vnhappy time, that

neither the deuise of ỳ fryer, nor the secrecy of the Nuns, nor her own pollicie could saue her honesty, for rising as their custome is at twelue a clock at night to sing certaine Hymmes, Barbadora in the midst of the quire fell in trauell, and though she sought by all meanes to conceale, and to bide many sore pangs, yet at last she was faine with a loud alarum to cry hier then they sung, which the Abbesse hearing, staid their Mattins and went to Barbadora, asking her what she ailde and what extreame disease paind her so. that she made such heauy shriking: the great bellyed Nun, half dead with paine, wold giue the Abbesse no answere but oh my belly, my belly, Frier Pedro, Pedro, oh my belly: the old matron perhaps in her youth had ben cured of the maides plague) perceiued straight where her shoe wrung her, and therefore charged the Nuns to hold her back, and she plaid so cũningly the Midwiues part, that Barbadora was deliuered of a pretie Boy, which the Abbesse seeing, after she knew that all danger was past, she raged and railed against the pore Nun, laying open not onely the grieuousnesse of the sin, but also her owne discredit, and cheifly ỳ blemish that should redound to her, to the house, & all her fellow Nuns, through her only-lightnes of her life: after she had almost chaft her selfe out of breath, she questioned who was the Father, and Barbadora in great contrition of minde, told her how her holy Father Frier Pedro did it. The Abbesse swearing a mortall reuenge against the Frier for the loue she bare to Barbadoras Father Signior Ideaques Bartolos, & for the care she had, least if this fact were knowne, her Nunrie shold grow in open contempt, she began to salue the matter amongst the Nuns: I cãnot deny sisters quoth she, but as your vow is holy, so the breach of virginity in this case deserues no lesse then hell fire, & without repentance can haue no absolute pardon, for the scape of a Nun is more then of another ordinary Woman, and for that course onely vpon suspition, I remoued fiue of your fellowes which I thought faultie, yet flesh is fraile, & women are weake vessels, especially tempted by such a subtil Serpent as Frier Pedro is, and therefore the fault is

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the lesse, & the more willingly to be shadowed, so that I charge you here to conceale the matter both for your own & mine honour: and if any of you all haue bẽ by him perswaded to the like folly, tell it to me now in secret, and I wil be as silent as your selues to salue and saue your honesties. The Nuns hearing this, all fourteene fell down on their knees before the Abbesse and cried out vpon frier Pedro (letcherous Frier Pedro) and curst him: the Abbesse suspecting nothing of the whole 14, bad them beware not only of him (for he should no more come within their Doores) but of all others that hereafter shold be their Confessors. Alas Madam (qd Iuliana) it is to late, for we all 14. are with childe by him: marry God forbid (qd the Abbesse) and blest her, what (qd she) is at a clap with childe and only by one Frier! Then I see well the diuell is growne deuout, when Friers deale their almes so franckly: but by swœt S. Anne (said she) I will be reuenged on the Frier, and all the Couent shall pay swœtly for ingrossing the market, and buying so much flesh for his owne dyet.

So she fel to more strickt examination of them, whether any moe friers came with him or no: and they confest that he had procured euery one of them a louer, & deliuered their names, which she taking note of, deferd not reuenge very long, lest suspition might be had, but thus cunningly sought to acquite the wrongs profered both to her & her house: she sent her steward abroad to buy great prouision of victuals, & then her own selfe went to ỳ Abbot, and desired that her Confessor and 14. of his friends might take part of a feast which she had prouided: the Abbot granted, & the Friers gaue her great thanks, & promised to come, all laughing in their sleeues that she should giue the faire Nuns and them leaue to haue one merry supper together, seeing in secret they had so many nights lodging ỏ them. The Abbesse went home smiling, and prouided certain tall sturdy knaues for ỳ purpose, that were tennents, and belonging to the lands of the Nunry, & commaied them all neere vnto the backe place of the Chappell, and had giuen them her minde out plainly, to deale with the friers as she had decreed:

and thereupon placed in that back rome fiftéene great blocks all standing one by another as orderly as might be.

Hauing thus fitted all things to the purpose, she put vp the Nuns euery one into their Cels, lest they should giue any inckling vnto the Fryers of her determination. At the hours appointed, these frolicke Fryers came clad in their coules with smoth faces, and dissembling hearts, hauing great shew of prayers in their eies, and hope of lecherie in their thoughts: but howsoeuer, the old Abbesse gaue them a most courteous and friendly welcome, telling them that the Nuns were all this day busie cookes about the feast, onely her selfe was left to giue entertainment: they gratulated her curtesies, & she led them all into a great Parlor, where she caused the Steward to bring them in Wine: then the place being strong, she went forth and called the Confessor to her, and then leading him into the backe rome appointed for the purpose, the tall knaues laid hold on him, and there stripping him into his shirt they toke a great thrée forked naile, and fastened the Fryers Dowcets of dimissories fast to the block, to the great paine & amasing of the Fryer. Well, howsoeuer hee complained, hée could not get any answere of the Abbesse, but that shee laught heartily: and thus by one and one she drew out the Fryers, and nayled them fast in their shirts to the blocks; then laying downe by euery one of them a sharp knife, she began to make her Oration thus. Gentle Father Pedro, and you the rest of the holy Fryers, you know the smallest sin craues some pennance in the Lay people, then what doe great offences in Fryers? hée which knowes his Masters will and doth it not, must be beaten with many stripes: so you that know letcherie was a deadly sin, and had all by solemne oathes vowed chastitie, haue gotten all the Nuns of my house with child. Therfore I in charitie haue for your soules health appointed you this pennance. At that word all the country fellowes set fire in the thatch, and the house began to burne: you sée (quoth she) either burne to death, or els hére ly knaues to frée your selues, now it is at your owne choice whether you wil burne or geld

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your selues, and hereafter endeuour to keepe chastitie.

The Fryers hearing this hard resolution, began with humble lookes to intreat her, but in vaine she made them all a low curtesie and went her waies.

The Fryers in great perplexitie seeing the house all on fire, and that they began to frie in their shirts, and the house ready to fall about their eares; Fryer Pedro learning first to play ỹ man, toke the knife and whipt off his genitories, and away he runs towards the Abbey, and euery frier fearing the fire, plaid the like part, and away they run bleeding, as fast as their legs would carrie them: the fire grew great, and it was perceiued a farre off, so that Signior Ideaques Bartolos (Barbadoras Father) espied it, fearing his daughters mishap, ran thither himselfe. The Abbot being told the Nunry was on fire, made no little hast for feare of his Fryers, & an infinite of other people being deuoutly minded to the Nunry ran thither, and as they went, Signior Bartolos & the Abbot, met the Fryers running away in their shirts, which amasing them, the Abbot said what newes Frier Pedro? what, the Nunry a fire, and you run away in your shirts, what meaneth this? I know not, I know not sir (said he) wee were there late enough, the diuell burne house, Abbesse, Nuns and all, and away trudged the Couent, euery man to his lodging, and sending spedily for a skilfull surgeon, the Abbot with the rest of the townes-men, and Signior Bartolos came thither, and by that time the rose was pulled downe, and all quencht, and they found the Abbesse ready to entertain them friendly. They wondring at this, demanded how the fire came, and what the reason was the Fryers ran away in their shirts? The Abbesse recounted vnto them from point to point, what had hapned, and how fiftene of the Nuns were with childe vnder the shadow of confession, by those Fryers, & therefore she had sought reuenge to cleare her selfe of that crime: because your eies shall witnes what bitter punishment I haue appointed them for pennance, come all with me. & so she led them into the back rome, where she shewed the the knives, & what the Fryers for feare had left behind them. At this they all fell into a great laughter, except Bartolos (who grieued for his Daughter Barbadora) yet hee highly com-

commended the Abbesse for her reuenge, & she was honoured through the citie: the Nuns banisht their religeous house, the Friers put out of these Doctors: and the fiue poore Nuns that were thrust out (without cause) entertained againe: and euer after, the Nunry was in great fame and credit. Now to a second remedy, how to stop the mouth of a Vsurer, when his couetousnes complaines of famine and cannot bee satisfied.

An excellent dyet for an Vsurer, when his conscience is starued.

IN Rauenspurge, in Germany, there dwelled a Iew that was a vsurer, who liued by ỹ spoil of his purloining faculty and reapt with ease what others had purchast with labor: rich he was, and well monied, & ready to lend vpon any reasonable assurance: but as he was sweet to pleasure at the first, so at the last, whosoeuer tasted of his fauours, found them bees wt stings, and faire panthers with deuouring panches, that al his curtesies were but fowlers gins to bring a bird to the snare, and then to prey vpon them like Crocodiles aliue: for this miserable Iew was plyant to the suite of any man, that brought him either sufficiẽt suerty or pawn: but if he broke one minut of his appointed houre, he toke the forfeits wt all extremitie. Gathering thus infinit treasurs into his hands, he grew by this extorting qualitie to be one of the richest men in Rauenspurge: yet though his wealth was great, & he in debt to none, his belly sued an action of trespasse (damage fiue hundreth pounds) against him, as being indebted to it, in so much for hũgry meales, and hard cheere that hee had past ouer in his lifetime, for he was not only spare in his diet, but miserable, grãting himselfe oftentimes no other then water to quench his thirst, and feeding vpon nothing but the most refuse meate in the shambles to satisfie his hunger. This Iew called Ioachim Gorion, thus flourished and toke his onely felicitie in feeding his eyes with the sight of infinite treasure, not respecting the ruine of many poore men, so he by their miseries might inrich him-

himselfe. Whereupon he grew in open contempt, and hatred of all the people, but as the For the more he is curst, the better he fareth, so Ioachim the more the poore exclaimed against him, the more his profits and reuenewes came in.

At last it fortuned that a Farmer bordering nere vnto Rauenspurge, being called Hans Van Limericke, hauing a sum of money to pay, or else to lose certaine commodities fiue times worth the value, not knowing how to furnish himselfe with so much coyne, and finding friends slacke in time of necessity, at length called to minde this wretched Vsurer Gorian, and though he knew him to be a man of no conscience, yet assuring himselfe how he was able to pay his money that he borrowed againe at the day, was the better encouraged to deale with him, so that coueting rather to broke an inconuenience, then suffer a mischiefe, hee went to the house of Ioachim, & broke the matter vnto him: the Iew neuer denied but friendly promised him to lend him so much so he might haue sufficient assurance for his money. Hans hearing this, was glad, and said he ment to lay him his farme and all his Lands in morgage, w̄ a letter of defeisance recognised, that all the land should be his, if either he broke the day or houre. The couetous Iewe was content, so that taking a deede of guift with a promise of him, he tendered downe the money, and so fitted and supplied the Farmers present want, who went home merily, & dispatched such Creditors as he was vpon that day to discharge. The Iewe knowing the Farme to be a pretty plot, well scituated and three times worth the money, wisht Limerick dead, that he might freely enter possession of his goods and lands, but it fell out contrary to his desire and expectation, for the Farmer carefull of his day, because he knew the hard conscience of the Vsurer, straind himselfe and his friends, and prouided the money, and at the time appointed came and brought it to Gorions house: now the money was to be paid betweene two and three in the after noone, which Hans knowing, was there halfe an houre after two to deliuer his money: The Vsurer hearing that he was come, was greatly greeued that he had kept touch

so well, and therefore thought to ouer-reach him with that politicke cousinage, which he performed thus.

The Usurer had a clocke in his house, which went with such vices and gimmals, that by letting downe a pullie, he could make it strike what a cloke himselfe would: so, that sending downe word to him that he would come by and by, hee went himselfe and straind the pully, and the clocke presently struke three: whereupon the Iewe came downe, and demanded of Limericke what he would haue? Marrie sir (quoth he) I haue brought you home the mony I borrowed of you, with ỹ appoynted loane, and a thousand thanks, besides: promising for this saiour euer to eeke yours whilst I liue. My money Hans? (qd. he) why dost not know the effects of ỹ recognisance? I pray thee at what houres was the money to be paide? betweene two and three (quoth Limerickd) why so then it is now past three, and therefore Ile none of the mony, but stand to the forfeite of the bands that are lost to me by morgage: at this the poore farmer was some thing amazed, yet thinking the Iew had but iested, he smild, and began to turne the money on the bord, to tender it: but Ioachim tolde him flat that he was in earnest, and would none of the money: why Sir (quoth Hans) though your clocke hath strucken three, by other clockes it is little past two, and therefore I hope you will not so vniustly stand vpon the aduantage: the Usurer answered him that his clocke went right and he would take none: vpon which they fell at great debate, till at last other clockes in the towne strucke three also, which when the Iew heard, hee was glad, and bad him if he could count what it was a clocke, to be briefe, he would not receiue a penny, but stode to the extremity of the morgage.

The poore Farmer grieuously perplexed, intreated him with teares, obiecting that if it were so, a minutes breach was not much: but in vaine all his perswasions were boteleſſe breathed into the ayre, for the Iew that had his hart as flinty as Adament, felt no remorse, but went into his closet, and left poore Limericke with his complaints, who sorrowfully going

home

home to his wife, bewraide the matter vnto her, who partaking her husbands griefe with equall discontent, perswaded him to patience, and told him hée had no better remedy then to make his complaint to the Signorie and rulers of the Cittie, which he did, and cald the Iew at a Law day before the iudge, and there reuaeled his case at large, for might ouer-comming right, and money peruerting the truth, he went home with a flea in his eare, vtterly vndone and beggered, and the Vsurer merily tryumphing in the verdite of his reuenues.

This past on a yéere or two, till at last poore Hans grew to that extreame want, that hee had neither money, credit, nor house to put his head in, which so vered him, that at length he grew weary of his life: for being faine from a man of some account to great contempt by his pouertie, hée ware into a kinde of despairing lunacie, and had oftentimes in his melancholly humor slaine himselfe, had not his wife preuented him by her carefull diligence.

While thus Limericke liued in beggers estate with his wife and three small children, this Iew (this Ioachim) this wretched Vsurer, as he tryumphed in his wealth, was one day suddenly stricken with sickneſſe that he went to his bed, and there lay till he grew queſie at the heart, and then hee sent for phisitians whom he greased with golde, and bad them spare for no cost, so he might recouer his former health: they applyed Potions, Electuaries, Glisters, Purgations, and Pilles, but in vaine. Contra vim mortis, non est medicamen in hortis.

They could finde out no Simple, Hearbe, Stone nor Minerall, Drugge nor compound so comfortable, that any way might mittigate his diseaſe, so that growing past helpe of man, the Phisitians left him, and certaine deuout men of the towne came to perswade him to God, seeing hee was no man of this world, wishing him to enter with deepe insight into his owne minde, and to search his conscience for many wrongs and extorting iniuries hee had offered to poore men, setting before his eyes the paynes of Hell due to sinners, as condigne punishment. Ioachim hearing all, a long time

time with patience answered not a word, but onely desired the to depart, & to trouble him no more for a while: which they did, and he turning himselfe, lay two or three houres in a trance considering and repeating in his minde, the infinite wrongs and palpable iniuries he had offered the poore, the widdow and fatherlesse, which striking a remorse into his conscience, seeing he must die, and measuring his sinnes with the iustice of God, and hauing no grace to thinke vpon his mercie, hee started vp, and with his eyes staring, cryed vnto his man and sayd, oh the Plague, the plague, the plague is here my Ben, the plague: his man thinking he had raude for want of sleep, desired him to be patient, and to leaue off those franticke exclamations. Oh thou of my tribe (qd. he) I am in my right minde, the plague is here euen in my conscience, in my inward soule, I am worse then Cain or Iudas: I haue murdered more then they two by extortion, & therefore I cannot be saued: the plague is in my conscience, my Ben, the plague: his man (although hee hated his maister) & wisht him at the Diuel, yet to blind the world with the opinion of a dutifull seruant, he presently ran for the chiefe Burgamasters of the towne, who comming hastily to comfort and counsell him, found him in this dispairing humour, and could by no means draw him to any hope of grace: whereupon they left him as he liued, & so gaue him ouer to die, he cõtinuing still in this melancholly despaire. While thus he languished in this mad mode, Hans and his family harbored in poore estate in the Citty, and hearing of this extreme sicknesse of the Iew, was glad that God had so sharply auenged him of his enemy: but yet this mishap bred him small helpe, whereupon desirous to die, he went and at an Apothecaries shop bought him a mortall confection, which he purposed to take to rid him from his present miserie.

Hauing kept it a long while in a Violl, at last he sat in a great studie vpon his present hard fortunes, and houering betweene grace & dispaire, at last he resolued to go try now what this Vsurer would doe. happily (said he to himselfe) his sicknes hath altered his conscience, and his minde is better now touch

with

with the doubt of death, then when before hee had no other thoughts but vpon life, so that I will make experience if hee will compassionate my miserie, and make some restitution of that which so wrongfully hee detaineth from mee. In this minde the poore man went to Gorions house, and knocking at the doore, he found none there but poore Beniamin, who was almost wearie of his life, with the extreame trauell that hee had with his lunaticke Iewish Master, and he poore soule began to turne Christian, and to pittie the Farmer, and wisht him to come in.

It may be (saith he) grace yet will be sent to him, and the touch of his exhortion will turne his conscience, therfore come vnto him, and speake face to face with him: The Farmer glad of this, came into the chamber and saluted him in most humble manner. Who is that (oh Ben) saies the Iew, that salutes me? It is sir (quoth he) the poore farmer whose lands you entred vpon by a forfeit of morgage. At that as well as he could, he raised himselfe vp in his bed, and cryed out, Villaine take heed, he comes to rob me, beware of him, looke to my Coffers, to my gold, to my writings: where are my keyes? Sir (saith Beniamen) they be about your necke: for in his most extremitie, no, not till his latest gaspe would hee part from them, so that in a couetous lunacie he gropt for them, held them fast, and cryed out the Plagus, the Plague, oh Yell, Yell, the Deuill, the deuill.

So his man Ben perswaded him to be quiet, and to remember the poore man: the poore man, I marry Ben, well said (qd. the Iew) where is he? I will giue him his land againe I tooke from him wrongfully, and then he stood staring him in the face: hee will not liue long saith his man, stay you with him and talke with him, till I goe out and call some neighbours to bee with me.

The Farmer was content, so Beniamen went out and left them two together: as soone as he was gone, the poore man began to instruct him to God-ward, and seeing he was ready to die, to make restitution of such goods or Lands as hee

with-held from any man by extortion.

At this the Iewe lokt on him very ghastly, and spyed the Wall that ỹ poore man helde in his hand vnder his cloak: with that, in a rage hee cryed out, what hast thou there in the glasse? phisicke to cole my conscience that burnes like Hell hath the diuell sent to heale me.

The Farmer seeing this desperate Iewe voyde of all grace and giuen ouer by God into a reprobatesence, answered him briefly, he hath sent me to thée, ⁊ vild Vsurer, I haue brought thee Phisicke from the Deuill to helpe thée. Oh welcome, welcome sayes the Iew, what is in it? what is in it? Mary saith the Farmer, there is in it these simples following.

Heere are the teares of poore men distilled from their eyes through the anguish of thy extortion, and they are made luke-warme with the scalding sighes that throbs from their sorrowfull hearts, tempered with the curses of Widdowes and Orphanes, whom thou hast brought to beggery: these boyld with the fire of Gods wrath, and put vp by the Deuil into a viall of despaire, ⁊ prepared for thée to drinke, that after thou hast take this potion, thou mayest goe to the deuill without repentance.

Then giue it me (quoth he) and so he snatcht the viall of poison out of the poore mans hand, and drunke it off: the confession being strong began to suffocate his sences, that he lay still: perceiuing that he could not liue long, thought now, seeing no body was there, to prouide for himselfe: conuey any chests he could not: steale any goods he might not, for he had no opportunitie, and therefore God putting it into his minde, hee tooke penne and paper, and writ a scedule to this effect.

The Scedule which the Farmer writ.

Ioachim Gorion being whole of minde, though sicke in body, toucht with remorse of conscience for the manifest wrongs that I haue proffered to infinit poore men, Widdowes, and Fatherlesse children, hoping that the mercie of God is more

then

then my ſins, do ordaine Hans van Limericke my lawfull heire and Executor, as a man whome aboue all I haue moſt wronged, conditionally that he reward my man Beniamin, for his faithfull ſeruice: and for the ſurpluſage, let it be to him and to his heires for euer, of all my goods, lands, Cattles and moueables: and that this is my laſt will and teſtament, I haue thereto ſet my ſeale at armes.

Hans Limericke hauing thus cunningly written it, and being a good penman, ſo excellently well counterfeited his hand that it might not eaſily be diſcerned but the Iew himſelfe had written it: ſo pulling his ſeale off from his finger, he ſealed it, and then wrapping it vp, put it in a purſe that hung about the Iewes necke, for Ioachim was already ſenceleſſe, and lay ſtaring, but the poiſon had ſo ſuffocated his pipes, that he could not ſpeake.

By that came Beniamin with two or three poore men and Women to watch with him, whereupon the Farmer toke his leaue: and his man aſked him what newes: I can get no other anſwere of him than this, that when he is dead I ſhall heare what he will doe. At that the Iew lokt Ben in the face, and as well as he could, pointed to Hans, meaning how he had poiſoned him, but they toke it that he meant ſome good ſhould be done vnto Hans.

After his death, as ſoone as he was gone, the poiſon came to the laſt exigent, and the pangs of death drewe on, and they all perceiued that there was no hope of life, which ſorted accordingly to their expectations, for within one halfe houre after, the Iew died.

As ſoone as Beniamin ſaw him dead hee ſhed teares, more for faſhion then for loue: and hauing like a wiſe Coke lickt his owne fingers, that he neede no further legacy to ſhadowe the matter, ſent one ſtraight to ſignifie the matter vnto the Burgomaſters, that Ioachim the Iew was dead, and ſeing that he had neither made will, nor yet had any kindred that might claime it as his heire, it were beſt for them to loke for the diſpoſing of his goods.

The

The Burgamasters comming thither, with a generall consent, began to survay euery chest in the house, and to search each corner putting all into an inuentorie that they found, wch being summed together, redounded to an infinit wealth, besides his lands, leases, and tenements, that he had in the Cittie and country thereabout. At last missing the keyes of certaine chests that could not be vnlockt, Beniamin told thē they hung about his neck at his purse: they wondring at the exceeding couetousnesse of such a miserable man, smiled & tooke his purse, and searching what was in it, found the scrowle which Limericke had written, sealed with the Iewes seale at armes: which when they had well read ouer and determined vpon, they all censured that God had put some remorse into his conscience, both to make him heire whom he had so highly wronged, and that he was in so good a mind to make restitution of his misdeeds. Vpon this they called a Conuocation in their State-house, they sent after Hans, and by a generall decrée, made him a lawfull inheritour to the Iew: so Hans from a begger became richer then any Burgamaster, did many good deeds to the poore, made restitution and well rewarded Beniamin, thanking God that the miserable vsurer had couetously gathered and had him to be his heire, whom he neuer so much as once dreamt of.

How in a houshold of ciuill warre, a woman may be safe from a cruell husband.

In the Country of Deuonshire, not farre from Exceter, there dwelled a Rope-maker whose name I conceale: this Rope-maker (whom I will call Richard,) was about the age of some forty yéeres, and he was a parlous soure fellow, ill loued of his neighbours, because he so vnkindly liked of his wiues: for this iolly companion had bin maried to thrée wiues in ten yéeres, and had vsed them all so hardly, that he killed them all with kindnes.

This brought him in such hatred amongst all his neighbors, that

that though he were a man of very good wealth, and beſides his occupation, landed: yet the pooreſt & baſeſt wench in the whole countrye, did diſdaine to match herſelf with ſuch a frantick husband, ſo that being a widdower, hee had no hope euer to match himſelfe again, where he was knowne, and therefore apparelling himſelfe handſomely, and putting ſtore of crownes in his purſe, he went into Sommerſetſhire hard by Tanton, and there was a ſuter to a widdowes daughter that was a good propper maide and wellfauoured, but of no great wealth, & therfore the eaſier to be wood, & won of a ſtranger.

This rope-maker being a good propper man, and of a comely perſonage, became a ſuter to this maide, whoſe name was Mary, a wench of a good bone and a luſty complexion, much like to Lancaſhire breed, the maiden entring into conſideration of her mothers eſtate, and her owne pouertie, and ſeeing ſhe had few ſuters, becauſe the hope of her dowrie was but ſmall, liſtned the rather to Richards motion, who beeing of a ſmoothe tongue, and could ſet out himſelfe well in talke, as the Tiger when he meanes to prey, then euer hideth his clawes, and where the Foord runnes ſmootheſt, there is it deepeſt: ſo as the olde prouerbe is, the ſtill Sowe eates vp all the draffe: and he could vſe ſuch ciuill behauiour, trickt out with ſuch eloquence and glorious tearmes, that in ſhort time hee wonne the wench and married her, and after hee had remained a weeke or two at home with her Mother, he tooke his leaue to carrie her home to his owne houſe: although there was ſome ſorrow at parting betweene the Mother and Daughter, yet becauſe ſhe loued Richard well, ſhee tooke it patiently, and being hony moone, he ſeemed ſo chary ouer her, that it grieued him the winde ſhould blowe on her: well, home they went, and when ſhe came where he dwelt, ſhe found a houſe well ſtored with all things neceſſary, but ſhe wondered as the cuſtome was in their country, that none of his neighbors did come to welcome him to the towne: well, this paſt on till Sunday, and then ſhe went to Church: when they of the towne did ſee

that rich man the rope-maker had gotten so proper a woman to his wife, they began to say, that the more knaue had euer the better lucke, and in deed fortune was blinde when she suffered such a buzzard to light on such a chicken, and to pittie the poore womans mishappe, that had chaunced on such a froward and Hare braine Husband: yet swithing all vp with a good countenance, they, after seruice was done, welcommed her vnto the parish, and she returned them thankes very ciuill. It chanced one wife amongst the rest, whose sister this Rope-maker had maried and kild with kindenes, did long till shespake with Richards wife, that shee might make her priuy vnto her husbands vntoward qualities: & tarrying a great while to speake with her, at last finding opportunitie, discoursed vnto her how her husband had bin marryed vnto three wiues, and how cruelly he had dealt with them all, abusing them so that they tooke such grief, that for verie sorrowe they all dyed, telling her from point to point a number of his ill conditions, which although they wente colde to her heart, yet cheerefully made the Woman answere, that what her husband had done before, it little toucht her: the woman hearing Richards wife speake so modestly, and in the defence of her husband, only prayed God she might finde it so in the end, and so friendly they parted.

The Rope-makers wife being in a great perpleritie, that she had made such a choice in haste, that she might so deerely repent at leysure, hoping the best, shee went about her huswiferie till her husband came home, who returning within two daies after she welcommed him with all curtesie that a woman could affoorde to her husband: he thanked her, but not with the same familiar countenance he was wont to doe, which streight made her suspect that her neighbors tale would proue a true prophecie, but patiently bearing some vnkinde Frownes, shee dealt so carefully, louingly, and kindely with him, that he could finde no cause to beate her, in so much that his olde dogged nature within one halfe yeare began to breake out, so that she easily

perceiued

perceiued he sought a knot in a rush, and aymed earnestly to finde some Cauell that hee might hansell her bones with a cudgell: if shee looke merily on him, shee flowted him, and streight he lent her a bore in the eare for fleering.

If her countinance were sollemnly modest, then she loathed him, and what he did, and round about the house he went with a fayre Holly wand: if shee spake vnto him she was talkatiue; and streight she had a blowe on the lippes: if shee saide nothing she was sullen: and he would make her finde her tongue with a Rops-ende, which he called a Salt-Eele, and with which against her will shee broake her fast, dinde, & supt many a time: whatsoeuer she did huswifely in ỹ house, what meat she dreſt, what businesse she performed, al was misconstrued and rewarded with blowes, which draue ỹ poore womã into such a quandarie, that she wisht her selfe out of the world, her estate growing worse & worse: at last his habit grew to a custom & so she neuer went vnbeaten to bed, so that as now gentlewomen weare their maskes, so shee euerie Sunday went to Church with a blacke Face, which her neighbors espying, as they pitied her, so they smiled, that at length she had found their forewarnings to bee no other but meere prophecies, but although they had libertie to iest, so she had occasion to sorrowe, for the miserable man would driue her into great extremities, and make tryall of her patient nature, with wondrous contrarieties: for some time comming home late in the night, hee would bring sundrye of his Neighbors with him, and to shewe how hee could domineere ouer his wife, hee would make her light a pound of Candles at the great ende, which if either in iest or earnest shee refusde to doe, streight about the house shee went, and a had gentle remembrance to remember his fingers a month after.

And amongst the rest, one day to haue the world thinke in what seruile slauerie his wife stood of him, hee caused her to stand by him, whils hee made Ropes, and fill a Sine with water, a labour as endlesse, as painefull and contemptible,

so that the neighbors and passengers noting it, some praised the womans patience that excused her husbands foolish charge, with so stedfast and resolute a countinance: the poore wife living in this miserie by the space of some three or foure yeares: so one day being alone by her selfe, looking in a glasse, and considering advisedly how her wonted countinance was blemisht by her husbands unkindenes, shee fetcht a great sigh, and sware a mortall and fatall revenge, so that a deepe hate of his ill qualities entring in to her thoughts, shee resolu'd to make him repent those manye yeares he had made her leade in such servile miserie.

In this determination she gathered her wits together, and sought how to crie quittance with her husband, yet could shee finde no certaine meanes speedily to avoide the shrewish disposition of such an earthly Deuil, but bearing the Crosse with patience, rested the verie subiect of distresse: to run away shee would not, to withstand him she could not, she shamed to make complaint to the Justices: and thus everie way she was voide of any remedie, so that she brookt all, and went about her busines, till on a time fortune smiling upon her, and intending to give truce to this poore woman, it chanced that as shee was gathering rushes to make her house cleanly, against the next Holy-day, sitting sighing at her unhappines, she heard one sing a merrie song which she gave eare unto: The effect whereof, agreed greatly with her melancholly disposition, for it armed a salve for that sore, that pincht her, and applide a medicine for her continuall malladie: the contentes of the song were these.

A song sung by an olde Woman in a Medowe.

OF all the plagues which make poore wights,
unhappy and accurst:
I thinke a wicked husband is,
(next to the Deuill) the worst,

But

But Will young women come to mee
ile ſhew them how they ſhall,
With prettie ſleights and priuie tricks
ſtreight rid them from ſuch thrall

The husband frownes, & then his fiſt
lights on her tender cheeke:
And if ſhe doe reply a word,
a Staffe is not to ſeeke.
But will, &c

A iealious eye the huſband beares,
then is he out of quiet,
And ſhe muſt fit her humors then
to feed his braine-ſicke dyet,
But will, &c.

Elſe round about the houſe ſhe goes,
the holy Wand muſt walke:
And though his words bee reaſonles,
yet muſt ſhe brooke his talke,
But will, &c.

Thus men doe triumph like to kings
and poore Wiues muſt obey:
and though he be a verry foole,
Yet muſt he beare the ſway.
But will young women come to me,
Ile ſhowe them how they ſhal
With prettie ſleights and priuie tricks
ſtraight rid them from ſuch thrall.

The old woman hauing thus ended her ſong, the poore wife that with teares for ioy, heard ſome hope of her redreſſe, drew neere to finde out this olde woman, who had ſung ſuch a pleaſant Dittie, and finding her ſooth, ſhee ſaluted her curte-

earnestly, and after sundry broken sighes, flowen out of a pensiue conscience, she began to speake with her in this manner.

Mother (quoth she) as your age is great, so your experience is much, and therefore would I willingly discouer some parte of my greefe vnto you: the ould woman seeing the wiues face full of sorow, noting in her the very Anatomie of a pensiue woman, began to compassionate her fortunes, and therefore wisht her mildely and friendly, to reueale the cause of her distresse, & if any way it lay in her power, to satisfie her thoughts, her cares should be cured with either counsaile or comfort: the poore wife hearing the old woman speake with such a familiar relish vnto her, began her complaint thus:

The wiues complaint, of the conditions of an ill husband.

MOther I cannot conceit my griefes without sighes, nor manifest my sorrowes without teares, so bitter is the estate of my fortunes and so hapelesse is the euent of my redresse: I was once as you haue bene, a maide, and then the country Farmers reported my beautie to be as great, as now my miserie is extreame: Fate so appointed that I was woed and wonne by a rope-maker, a man I think (mother) not vnknowne vnto your selfe, if for no other cause, yet for the hard vsage of his wiues, and with that the poore woman burst into bitter teares, and the olde woman began to sigh, in vttering her conceit with an oath asked if she were the maid that Richard the rope-maker had maried; I am mother quoth she, that vnfortunate wife, that was once a maide, whose fortunes are made intollerable, by the bad nature of a froward husband: whose custome is neither at bed or at boord, to shew me any good countinance: if I looke soberly, then I am troubled with the sullen, and then he wakeneth me with a hallie to and: if I salute any of my neighbours with good-morrow, he saieth they are my Copes-mates, and then my bones beares the burthen: If I speake

to

to none he saith I scorne such as are his friends, and hee will make me finde my tongue if in my bed I fall a sleepe, beeing wearied with labor, he pincheth me wickedly, and cals me drowsie drunkard: if I ouer-wake him, then he puls me by the haire of the head, and saith I watch to cut his throat when he is a sleepe: yet mother, these are not the greatest sorrowes, for he hath a maide at home which he loues better then mee, and her he setteth on his knee before my face, bee ruis her the first morsell of the meat, and sometimes in the night he riseth from me to goe to her, and in the day if I but wish her to goe to her worke, if she frowne, then am I most pittifully beaten, as you may witnes with your eies, and with that shee discouered her naked bodie to her, which was all bruised blacke and blew, with stripes, and yet mother (quoth she) these are not the greatest sorrowes.

The olde woman colde at the heart, with the rehearsall of this poore wiues calamities, made her this kinde answere: daughter, inough I knowe by the man much ill, as this sixteene yeares that I haue knowne him, I haue entred into many discourses of his villanies, but letting him passe as he is, to the present redresse of thy miseries, what, sayes shee, hast thou no friends to goe vnto, whose abilitie may countervaile his currishnes, and bridle him by the lawe for such beastlines? Alas answered she, I haue none but an olde woman and poore like your selfe to my mother, and it greiues me to make a bootlesse complaint vnto her: why then (saith the olde woman) hast thou no friend who for the possession of thy loue may haue him about the pate, and so reuenge thy iniuries? Alas (mother) better had I dye miserably, then dishonestly, I haue none: And saith the olde Matron, I see thou art not strong inough to match him with blowes, and therefore must I flye for thy succour to my last phisicke, whose principles be so authenticall and sure, that they neuer misse, therefore tell me, hast thou any woman, that thou dar'st commit thy secrets vnto?

O Mother (saith she) two or three his mortall enemies, & my greatest frindes: then Daughter feare not (replyed the olde Counsellor) but listen well to my aduise. goe thy waies home, & do something that may displease him. Alas (saide she) that I may easily doe, for I cannot doe any thing that can please him: but what then, shall I seeke my owne destruction to bee beaten? for once daughter (qd. she) when thou maist for that beating liue at quiet for euer: But as soone as he offers to strike thee, stand in defiance of him, and say thou hast praied vnto our Lady for helpe, and she hath promised to helpe thee, and to reuenge all thy iniuries, and therefore bid him if he dares, but once while he liue touch thee a gaine in anger. If then he will swinge thee, beare it patiently, and take this powder that I shall giue thee, and when thou knowst he goes to worke alone by himselfe, giue it him in drink: the vertue of the powder is to suffocate and choake vp his sences, so that he shal not haue any feeling for the space of fiue houres, but hee shall lye like a liueless carkasse, and his dreames shall be of women, & Angells: then daughter (& then she whispered many matters in her eares) whether they were charmes or spelles I cannot tell, but this I am sure it was some good conceit, for the poore wife wept for ioy & on her knees thanked the woman for her aduise, and so they parted, she promising to bring her word within ten daies how her phisick had taken effect: well, to be short, merily goes this good wife home, & findes her husband dallying with her maide, at which sight her stomacke rose, and began to take him vp sharply, and to sweare that if she tooke her Maide and him so suspitiously together againe, she would complain of him to the Iustices, and cut off her Maides nose for a generall example to such whores as she was.

The Rope-maker (this gentle Richard) pondering at his wiues vnaccustomed brauling, began no start vp, and to seeke for a cudgell, with that she as a woman resolued to follow her late counseler, made this reply:

Nay brain-sicke villain, strike me if thou darst, for through thy long abuses I haue hartily praied to our Lady for reuenge

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and she hath this day appeared to me, and promised me, that if thou dost hereafter, but touch the hemme of my vesture in anger, she will be auenged vpon thee so extreamely, that thou shalt repent the abuses thou hast proffered me, as long as thou dost liue. Richard smiling at this reply, made his wife this answere: huswife (quoth he) if our Lady haue appeared vnto you, our Lord her sonne hath shewed me a vision, that he that hath an ill wife and will not beat her, shall lead Apes in hell for his labor, and with that he fell vpon her, and pummeld her so soundly, that he had almost kild her, and she began halfe to repent that she followed the olde womans counsaile: yet hoping for time to reuenge, she bare all things with the more patience, and finding opportunitie vppon a day or two after to speake with her gossips, she reuealed vnto them the contents of the ould wiues counsaile, whereat they triumphing and glorying in this determination, they promised to plague him, and to performe whatsoeuer should redound to her commoditie, and owing such secrecie, as that it should neuer come out by any meanes whatsoeuer.

Time passing on thus, it fortuned that our Rope-maker, and his maide, were wont euery weeke twice, to goe to a strange house, and there she turned the wheele while he twisted his Ropes: when their busines was done, what exercise they vsed I know not: one day amongst the rest, Richard and his maide going alone to this solitarie place, to make their ropes, he commaunded his wife to fill them a bottle full of drinke, for he could not returne before night: she glad of this opportunitie, put the dormitarie powder that the ould wife had giuen her into the bottel, which they taking, went their waies merily together, and the drink and the powder with iogling was made a meere potion: as soone as they were gone, she crept out and went to her Gossips, and discourst vnto them the whole matter, and with that shee drew out from vnder her kyrtle two three stringed whippes of sharpe and hard twisted cordes, with round knots vpon the endes, all to cut the flesh with a small stroak, these she bequeathed vnto them, and hi-

bly vppon her knees, desired them not to spare for pittie to punish them to the highest extreamitie: they promised to shewe iustice without mercie & especialy one of thē who was sister to one of his former wiues, that he had kid with kindenesse, who for an olde grudge did intend now to bee fully reuenged: and so they went to the grange house, where leaning them consulting together, and the good wife gone home full of hope, let vs returne to the Rope-maker (Richard and his maide.)

Richard after hee had dispatched some part of his businesse, would to dinner or drinking, and after his Maide and he had louingly broken their Fast, they would like Doues fall to billing, but hauing drunk soundly of the potion, it began to mortifie their sences, that hee desirous to take a nappe, laying his head in his Maides lappe, fell fast a sleepe, and shee as heauie as he, leaning her head on her maisters shoulders, was in a deade traunce.

When these two Gossips came and found them thus drowsily tombled together, although they saw them soundly a sleep, yet were they affraide vntill they had made experience of the effects of the potion: for they shooke them; prickt them with pinnes, and vsed all meanes to awake them, but it was impossible, whereupon they grew bolde, and pulled off his apparel, not so much as leauing his shirt vpon him, and they fell vnto belabouring of him with their whips, in such monstrous manner that the blood came downe aboundantly from all parts of his bodie, and they cut him with their lashes to the verie sinewes: so then at length they ceaste, pulled on his apparell as it was before, and drest him vp verie mannerly, not so much as leauing his points vntrust or any thing vndone, whereby he might perceiue hee had bene made vnready.

Hauing thus drest him in his kinde they fell to his Maide, and serued her with the same sauce that her maister was vsed with all, and when they had punished her throughly, they drest her againe, laced vp her cloathes, and laide them together as they found them, and went their waies merrily to the Rope-makers house, discoursing vnto their Gossip all what had hap-

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ned, who ioyfull of this newes, made them the best cheere in her house, and thanked them heartily for their labours, promising the next day to tell them what her husband would suspend in this tragedie.

Well, the time of the working of ỹ potion being at an end, sith they drunk together, they began to awake together, but the Maide being youngest, had the strongest senses, and therefore the operation soonest walked in her, and halfe between slumber and awake about to stretch herselfe as drowsie folkes doe, her smocke so cleaued to her skin, that the verie smart thereof made her not onely awake but to shriek out, so that when shee was come to her selfe she wondred what shee ailed, that all her flesh was so sore, so that pulling vp her petticoate and looking vpon her thighes, shee found them all in a gore blood, lasht and cut in with Whip-corde almost halfe an inch deepe, which made her to stand in a maze, wondring how she should become so greeuously tormented. At last vnlasing herselfe, shee found all her body worse, so that shee could not lift her hands to her head. Whervpon she cried out and her maister awaked: being halfe in a dreame, and his eyes scarce open, as hee was about to stretch him his shirt claue so to his backe, that hee felt intollerable paines.

Oh Isabell (quoth he) what aile I? or where am I? what haue I dreampt? and what doe I feele? Alas Maister, I am almost whipt to death since I fell a sleepe. I think it is some accursed Fayries that haue done this deede, and shee shewed him all her body, whereat hee fell into bitter teares, and then shee tolde him that shee was lased and braced as shee was before. Alas Isabel (quoth he) helpe mee to vnbutten mee, for I cannot stirre my hand to my bosome I am so sore, then vntrussing him hee found himselfe worse whipt then his Maide, whervpon hee fell into consideration of the wordes of his wife vsed against him, threatning him that our Lady would reuenge her wrongs, so that he told his maid, no doubt it was the Virgine Maria that had thus punisht

them both for the wrongs hee had proffered against his wife, promising if euer God sent him to his health, hee would neuer strike her again, nor misuse her so long as hee liued. So he desired his Maide to helpe him home, and shee as lame as hee, could scarse rise, yet one of them helping one another, they went creeping home as well as they could.

As they went lamenting home by the way, they mette with the Vicar of the Parish: this olde Sir Iohn meeting his neighbors (and one of his friends and parishioners) in this woful perplexitie asked him how he fared?

Oh Maister Vicar (quoth hee) not as a man of this world: you seeme weake (quoth the Vicer) sit downe and rest you, and tell me where your greefe lyes, happilye I may giue you some good counsaile. Oh Maister Vicar (quoth hee) I am in no case to sit downe, I am so beaten with whipps, that I cannot stirre any ioynt of my body without paines. Why what ayle you? how should it come so to passe? with that the Ropemaker told him from point to point what had hapned to him, and to his Maide, and how his wife threatned him the other day, how that our Lady had appeared vnto her, and promised reuenge, and I thinke it is she or some of her holy Angells that hath whipt me and my maide, for wee slept but a nappe, and when wee awoke, wee found neither hand nor foote stirred, no point vntrust, no button vnbutoned, nothing out of order, and yet our selues so whipt, that I thinke I cannot liue till the morning, wherefore good Maister Vicar pray for me.

Sir Iohn hearing this, was wonderfully astonied, & wisht him to goe home to his wife, to mend his manners, and reconcile him selfe vnto her, and hee would pray for him the next day in the Church: so they parted, and home stumbles Richard and his Maide, and comming to the doore found his wife sitting in the entrie at her wheele, she seeing her husband comming so simply and weakely with his Maide, although shee tickled at her heart for ioy that they were so well whipt, yet shee fained great sorrowe at their present sight, and throwing downe her wheele for haste ran and met him, and weeping fained teares,

saide

saide: alas, alas, what ailes my husband? and offered to take him by the arme to stay him: he cryed out, oh wife touch me not, I am sore sicke and cannot escape death, our Lady at thy request hath given me I feare me my deaths wound, for shee hath almoste whipt me and my maide to death: oh wife forgive us, and pray for us, and if we ever hap to live together, I will amend my life, and become a new man, and never speake angrie word to thee againe while I have breath in my bodye: the Wife seeming passing sorrowfull at this, wisht that our Lady had given her so much, so that he had escaped, so helping him in, shee laide him downe vppon a soft pallet, and came and tolde her Gossips what had hapned and how her husband came home and his maide with him. So they came with her hastilye laughing amongst them selues, but to his face pittying the chāce, so that by their helpe his maid and he were holpen to their beds, where when they had lyen a little, and were come to some warmth, their flesh fell on bleeding a fresh, so that the Surgeon being sent for to stanch the blood, seeing their woundes, and hearing the strange case, fell in a great amase with himselfe, and saide, the dooing of God was wonderfull: much adoe had he to stop the Flure of the blood, yet at last he got it stauncht, but they lay in moste miserable perplexitie, almoste slaine with the whipping.

Wel, the newes of this (as women are borne blabs) began to goe about the towne, yet the two Gossips wondred at it, as much as the rest, and this happning vpon a satterday, the next day being sunday, (good honest Sir Iohn) came to visite his neighbour, and finding him almost speechles, after some words of comfort vnto him he went to Church, where after the first Lesson, he began a certaine prayer for the health of the Ropemaker, who hee saide lay speechlesse, and at the merrie of God, and that through a strange and wonderfull fortune, and therefore desiring all them that were present to pray for him, he began to take his text out of Saint Peter, how wives should obey their husbands, and husbands cherrish their wives, sith they were but one flesh, and therein for an example brought

in the strange aduenture of Richard the Rope-maker, how hee had abused himselfe to all his wiues, and so making manifest the wickednes of his life, did tell them what reuenge our blessed Lady had taken vpon him in a dreame, and so from point to point discourst vnto them what had hapned vnto him, wishing them by his example to amend their liues, least for beating their wiues the like punishment fall vpon them. This text no little pleased the wiues of the parish, for they tickled at it, and the men they were amazed to heare of such a wonderful chance, so that in the after noone, al the parish came to see him and behold him, as if Lazarus had bin rizen from the dead, there finding a more pitifull spectacle then maister Mickar had told them of, they all saide that as the cast was verie strange, so the reuenge was iust, such as were shrews to their wiues, but the lip, and were afraide of our Ladies whipping At last Richard gathering his sperits, and his speeches together, exhorted his neighbours by his example, not to abuse and beate their wiues, telling vnto them the full tale of this Tragedie.

This discourse pleased the Wiues, and affrighted the husbands, so that if any in the towne offered to strike his wife, shee would streight vow to make her complaint at our Ladies shrine, and so they scapte many a sharpe scoure. But to be briefe, Richard lay long sicke and his maide, and his wife tended and comforted them so well, that at length they recouered some part of their strength, and when he was able to walke abroad he humbled himselfe to his wife, and durst not abuse her al his life after, if by chance they had fallen out, she would say streight, Well I say no more, but our Lady requite my iniuries: and then would her husband neuer goe abroad till his wife and hee were reconciled and made friendes, so euer after shee weare the breeches, & was Maister, and all the Wiues in the parrish fared the better, and were all greater benefactors to the Shrine of our Lady, that rid them from the hands of their iniurious husbands.

And thus with a Rauens quill haue I written this Almanacke, which foretelleth strange, ominous & most dier euents.

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The plagues where of I haue spoke shall as certainely fall out as the Famin, and Ciuill warres: all three are dreadfull, all three are at hand. Make bonfiers therefore in your streets. (O you Citizens) to purge the ayre of all infection, albeit you keepe the inward houses of your bodies neuer so vncleane it is no matter. Open your gates to let in the countrie folkes, with prouision, to beate backe famin, but let the markets bee looked vnto as mens consciences are: that is to say, euerie one to racke it how he listeth. As for ciuill warres there is good hope they shall quickly be quenched, because so many hundreds of Constables watch day and night within the walles to keepe the peace: But by no meanes step you in and bee ticklers when the Church is at iarre within her selfe by schismes or by Temporizers, or when the husband and wife, the Father and Son, the Maister and Seruant, or when any other limbe of the politicke body challengeth the combat against him, whome by nature hee is bound to defend: if any predictions bring thee in pleasure or profit, thou wilt encourage mee to play the right Almanacke maker, and in another yeare to sing merrie tunes of my faire weather, as in this I haue strucke a dull string, sounding onely stormes. In the meane time suffer my Rauen (being wearie) to flye to some tree of rest, and there to proyne her selfe of her sicke Feathers, which she hath caught by medling with the diseases of 1609.

FINIS.

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